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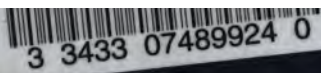
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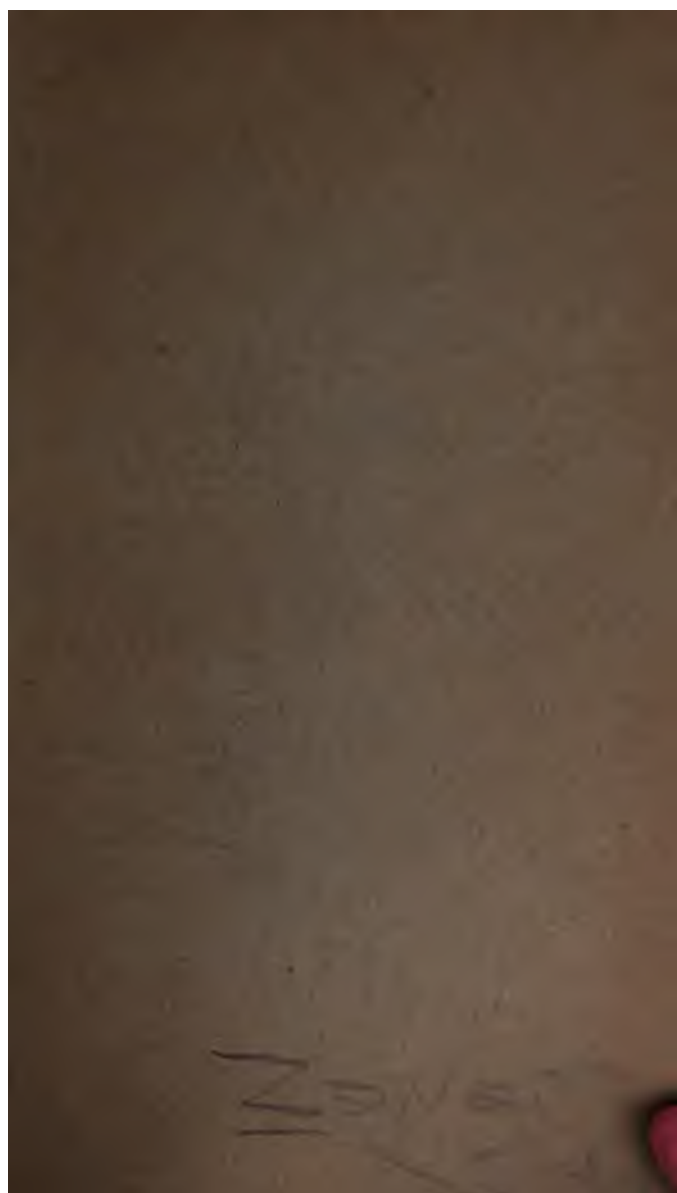
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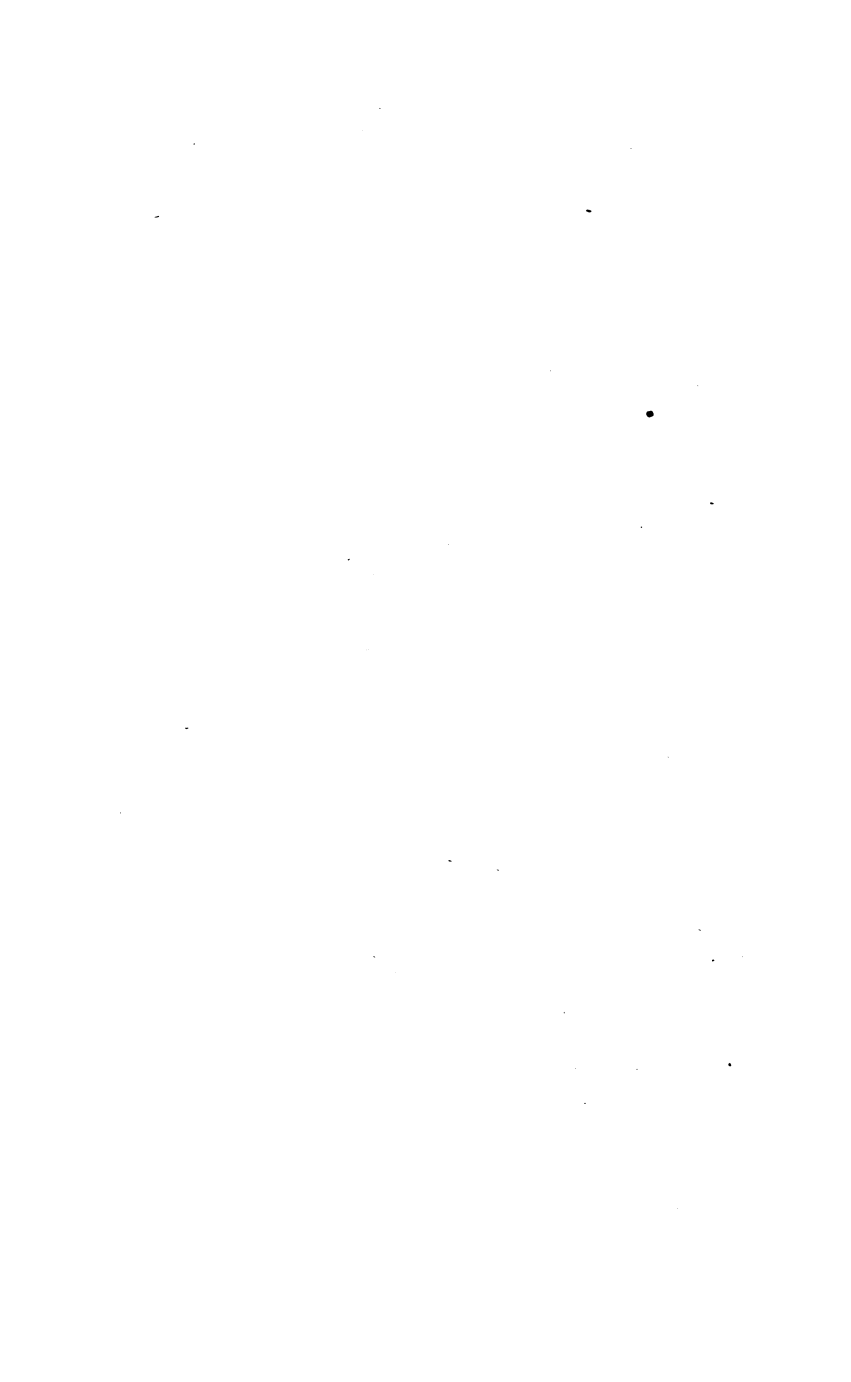
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**ASTOR, LENOX AND
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John Viking and the Viking.

THE VIKING;

AN EPIC.

BY

ZAVARR. pseud.

“The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth,
even they shall perish from the earth, and from under the
heavens ”—*Jeremiah, x. 11.*

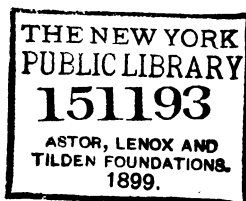
WITH NOTES.

LONDON:

E. CHURTON, 26, HOLLES STREET.

1849.

3r



ROY W. B.
CLUB
Y. B. B.

TO THE
COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON.

MADAM,

I MUST confess that it yields me pleasure to be enabled to assert that I do not affix your name to these pages merely for the sake of adorning them. Venial as the offence might appear to many, I should not consider myself justified in making such free use of another's eminence and fame, if I had no better excuse than the expediency of so doing. Yet, strangely enough, in urging my only plea—gratitude for the cordial approbation with

which you have cheered the humbler flights of my muse—I take a still greater liberty with the high literary reputation which is so deservedly yours ; for I may thus lead others to disparage your judgment, and suppose that your praises have fostered the vanity which has inspired me to make this adventurous essay. But your ladyship never advised me to attempt an *epic* ; and the sin of presumption must therefore rest upon my own head. Indeed, if I fail, I can fairly accuse nothing but my own incapacity. The subject I have chosen is happy ; for it is one which few poets have adopted, and which none have made their own. It has, from my childhood, been my favourite study ; my mind is deeply impressed with its various aspects, and, I think, sufficiently prepared for its illustration. Nothing wants, then, but the “ one thing needful ;” and whether I possess that or not, it is

for your Ladyship and the enlightened public to decide.

The poem that I dedicate to you, is the first of a series in which I intend to illustrate the various systems of mythology that have prevailed to any great extent in the world, and to show the wonderful influence they have had in forming the character of different nations. Many of these systems have in our day a wide-spread and vigorous vitality ; the existence of others may be traced in the superstitions that still survive in Christian countries, and appear, indeed, to be almost engrafted on the tree of life itself. I shall not, however, expatiate here on the wisdom of becoming acquainted with the origin of these relics of paganism, nor on the general importance of the labour I have undertaken, but advert at once to that division of the sub-

ject which "The Viking" is intended to exhibit—the faith of our heathen forefathers.

This was Odinism. Many of our daily customs and observances, our holidays, the names we apply to the seven days of the week, afford obvious and sufficient proofs of this. Yet, notwithstanding the important bearing which this belief has had on our national character and institutions, and the influence which its insidious remains still obtain over us from our very infancy, we are commonly more ignorant of its doctrines in their original form, than we are of the creeds of most other pagan religions. I have therefore, thought it best to begin my "Songs of Superstition" with three Odinic poems, "The Viking," "The Vala," and "The Valkyrja;" and I hope to convince the public ere I have done, that our admiration of the

beautiful impersonations of the Greeks and Romans, has induced an unmerited indifference with respect to the mythological literature of our Norse and Saxon ancestors. Although the Scandinavian or Teutonic deities would undoubtedly have seemed more sublime to us, if they had been favoured with a Homer to have celebrated their actions and attributes, yet, as it is, their appearance in the simple songs of the Edda, is not devoid of interest and dignity ; and, if they be introduced with proper regard to time and place, they have all the power and majesty required for the machinery of an epic. I think, too, that the fearless, hardy, and adventurous sea-rovers of the North offer as good materials for poetry, as the warrior chieftains of classic history ; yet our greatest bards have been contented with anything but their own, and have generally followed in the track of

ancient and foreign poets, whose *amor patriæ* they would have done well in imitating.

Although I have only entered the vestibule of my subject in "The Viking," I have already availed myself freely of the contents of the Sagas, Eddas, and Skaldic songs ; and the lover of Icelandic lore (for such it generally is) will easily perceive that the plot of this poem was suggested by the *Lodbrokarkviða*, and that my sea-king consequently bears some resemblance to the hero of that celebrated death song. I could not afford to soften and modernize the character, at the risk of depriving it of interest and fidelity. My pagan hero is indeed a battle-breathing spirit, but, withal, he is no misanthrope. He follows the faith of his ancestors, and acts in accordance with his rude notions of virtue. War appears to him

a duty, the means of glory on earth, the way to bliss hereafter. The character is not overdrawn, and might teach devotedness and perseverance to many who profess a belief infinitely more lovely, pure, and noble.

It is not, perhaps, in my part to say this ; but your ladyship will, I am sure, make due allowance for a poet who has written *con amore*—who has applied himself to his subject with an ardour which neither asks nor expects an adequate return. I am, of course, naturally anxious for the success of my work ; the more so because its failure will deprive me of the only excuse I have for pursuing my favourite studies. But, be the issue ever so disheartening, I shall never regret my devotion to the muses, since that has been the means of procuring me the friendship of so distinguished

a poetess as your ladyship, and your generous
permission to subscribe myself,

Your ladyship's most grateful,

Obedient, and

Devoted servant,

ZAVARR.

TO THE READER.

THE Viking, being intended to illustrate the mythology, manners, customs, and characteristics of the ancient Scandinavians, necessarily contains many names and allusions which require explanation. The notes appended to this volume correspond to such passages as have any obscure reference, and will, I trust, render the poem perfectly intelligible.

It may not be altogether unnecessary to inform the reader that the ancient pirates of the North were called Víkingar, and that a royal Víkingr was also termed a sea-king. The Víkingar and the sea-kings were the scourge of Europe for centuries; and the coast of England was subject to their ra-

vages from the time of the death of Ragnar Lodbrok till Harald Hardráda fell with his boastful banner at Stamford bridge. Yet these restless sea-rovers appear to have been as often engaged in commerce as they were in the terrific sport of Hilda (Hildar-leikr); and we behold in them all that *invincible energy*, for good or evil, which, under other influence, has wrought the greatest wonders of civilization.

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FORMALI.



FORMÁLI.

Hlióðs bið ec
Allar kindar,
Meiri oc minni,
Mavgo Heimðallar.
Vildo it ec Valfavövr
Vél fyr telia,
Fornspiöll fíra
Þau er fremst um man.—*Völuspá, st. i.*

THE banished Bragi saw his power decline,
And hung his harp upon a mountain pine:
A hundred winters through its strings had breathed,
A hundred summers round it verdure wreathed,
When from Hræsvelgur's wings a blast was flung 5
Against the aged limb on which it hung,

That bent and broke, and with it fell below,
The harp which sunk deep into Noreg's snow.
A sable Alf saw where the treasure dropped,
And ages after, when the wind had lopped 10 .
Off every tree, and laid the mountain bare,
Came to the spot and dug up what was there—
The harp untouched by time ; its sound as clear
As when it rang on Bragi's heedful ear.
The Álf abhorred the Sviar from his heart, 15
And would not to that race the lyre impart :
He gave it—better had its strings been mute—
In spite he gave it to Zavarr the Jute,
And made him swear to sing of songs but three,
Then cast it into an unfathomed sea, 20
Where buried 'neath the wealth of Rán's rich grot,
Its voice may die. Conceive ye this or not ?

PART FIRST.

ARI OK DÛFA.

A
A R I O K D U F A.

Hátt bárom þa geyra
Er tvi-togir taldunz,
Ok tyr ruðom víða.—*Lodbrokarkviða, st. iii.*

IN a sequestered vale stood an old oak,
Whose rugged majesty time had not broke,
Though moss had climbed its stalwart limbs around,
And in decay its topmost arms had bound :
Though now the leaves its aged branches bore 5
Were less luxuriant than they were of yore,
Yet were they still the fresh and cheerful green,
Which gave relief to that drear desert scene,

And kept at bay the sun's incessant glow,
So that no ray could break the shade below, 10
Or touch with gold the dark and knotted trunk,
Till on the barren hills, day's brightness sunk,
And, shaping shadows strange as wildest dreams,
Sól sent aslant the earth her* weakened beams.
Around were naked stones, dark rocks, and hills ; 15
And through the valley ran pure sparkling rills,
Which made sweet music for the desert's ear,
For seldom breathing thing was there to hear.
How desolate ! from that wide rocky bed,
Save one old oak, no verdure reared its head : 20
How that on such a sterile spot had grown,
And thrust in roots where all seemed barren stone,
And fed its mighty trunk with potent life,
Was to the ignorant with wonder rife.
They deemed it magic ; and report averred 25
Terrific sounds round it at night were heard ;

* The sun is feminine in the Icelandic and the German.—
See note 1 to Part First.

Many who then had dared to venture there,
Returned no more to break their friend's despair.
They who had crossed that valley after dark,
Of grisly shapes, wild shrieks, and horrors stark, 30
Had ever told ; and some in whispered breath,
Said there to go on revel nights was death ;
Assembling then beneath the giant tree,
Fiends held their orgies in malignant glee,
And nourished its deep roots with human blood, 35
And thus some thousand years that oak had stood.
Such was the rustics' faith ; and many a tale
They could narrate of that unhappy vale :
The valley oak became a sound of fear,
And seldom human footstep ventured near. 40

'Twas very late ; and fast the fearful moon,
Moved onward to night's spirit-haunted noon,
When under that enchanted oak appeared
A lovelier form than heathen e'er revered.

Pale as the marble image of the shrine 45
Where votaries kneel to Beauty's form divine—
Bright as e'er radiance round a seraph burned,
When freshly from the Fount of Light returned,
Alone beneath that damp ill-omened shade,
Like some blest vision stood a Saxon maid. 50
And why? hath such a place for her a charm
Which wakes in valiant breasts far more alarm,
Than perils on the storm-directed main,
Or dangers on the battle's bloody plain?
No, no; her cheek with fear is deadly pale 55
At every sound borne by the moaning gale;
And well its sigh amid the rugged rocks,
With plaintive tone a human murmur mocks:
Wild voices hurry on, and when close by,
Expire in frightful groan or doleful sigh— 60
Her cheek is blanched with yet a paler hue,
And every tale of horror proven true.
The sound is changed—a blush mounts to her cheeks,
And sweet confusion gentle rapture speaks;

That sound hath passed—now mourns the wind again,
The flush is gone, and former terrors reign. 66
Thus hope and fear by turns her soul possessed,
Exhausting with their change her anxious breast.
Ah, she is patient who restrained her tears ;
And she is brave who combats with her fears. 70
Why should the callous virtue's laurel have ?
Who quell no fear, can ever they be brave ?
They may ; but as their courage costs them nought,
Their recompense should be as cheaply bought.
To conquer weakness linked to human mould 75
(For sin is such) makes mortals good and bold.

From the far east hath risen a cloudy mass
Which slowly will beneath the bright moon pass :
How long in this suspense must she remain ?
Fast on the failing light the shadows gain : 80
When o'er the dell their fearful veil they fling,
And quench the moon's mild rays like Death's wide
wing,

What shall she do? She is a monarch's child,
Whom love hath to this wizard dale beguiled;
And never knew to wait as she must now, 85
With throbbing bosom and with fear-dewed brow.
No need her gentle nature had to learn
The lessons only taught by fortune stern;
For others' pains and wants she always felt,
And to the needy willing bounty dealt: 90
By the poor loved dearly, yet the proud her smile
Far easier than rich gifts could reconcile:
Rude discord by her dulcet voice was stilled,
And angry breasts with melting love were filled:
Her beauty wrought whate'er she wished to do; 95
She lived delighting and delighted too.
The reach of care she seemed to be above,
Till her young heart at last acknowledged love;
Yet many a youth that painful rapture learned
From her bright eyes ere her own bosom burned;
And many a chief had striven to impart 101
To her pure breast the passion of his heart,

As vainly as the meteor's doubtful glow,
Passes o'er Lapland's plains of stainless snow.
To give with grace, refuse and not offend, 105
In every lover to retain a friend,
She learned from the teaching of her woman wit,
Unconscious of the skill, though using it.
The valiant asked not for more fitting meed,
Than her approving smile for venturous deed ; 110
And when upon fair England's fruitful coast,
The roving Dane came with his murderous host,
She gave the leaders of her country's bands
The sacred banner with her own white hands ;
And little deemed that e'er their foemen dire, 115
Her soul with aught but horror could inspire :
So deeply hidden are the ways of fate,
Which will control alike our love or hate.
But yesternight Edgiva heard the cry—
"To arms ! to arms ! the Danes—the Danes are nigh !"
The maid could see on the horizon red, 121
The spreading fires where helpless victims bled.

Fast came the pale-faced swain whose lack of breath
Stopped for a time his tale of blood and death :

A needless story then, for all well knew 125

The Dane was there who plundered, burnt, and slew.

The aged king hath ta'en his weapons strong ;
His glittering warriors fast around him throng,
And soon into a dreadful army form,
And haste away like a departing storm. 130

Where fire was raging and where blood was shed,
They came too late—the wary foe had fled.
The angry king may mark destruction's power,
To mar an age of toil within an hour ;
When he hath mused enough upon such wrack, 135
May hie him bootless to his palace back,
And vent his royal chafe in threats sublime,
And borrow vengeance of the coming time.

In sooth not he : “ On, on, my merry men !
O’ertake them yet—by heaven, I swear again, 140
This sword leaves not my hand till to its hilt
It smokes with Danish blood in vengeance spilt !

By these dear homes now wrapped in lurid fire—
By dearer friends who in their flames expire,
On, on, I say ! nor let one fiend escape 145
To boast of Saxon's blood and virgin's rape !"
His warriors answered with courageous shout,
And hastened after the spoil-laden rout.
The frequent tokens of the hamlet's sack,
The monarch met upon the robbers' track ; 150
Along the path the murdered captives lay,
And fire and ravage marked their scathful way :
The hoary king the tighter grasped his brand,
And urged with words of fire his eager band :
Such was its speed that he at dawn discerned 155
The heathen foe 'gainst whom his anger burned.
A green hill top which gave extended view,
Disclosed to him a bold and savage crew
Who made their weeping captives bear the spoil
Of their own cherished homes and arduous toil ; 160
Lashing the hindmost of the wretched throng,
They drove them like a frightened herd along.

Out spake the brave old king : “ Be wise and bold ;
His helmet I will fill with mancs of gold,
And honour with the highest rank I may, 165
Who most of yonder Danish dogs shall slay.”
So loudly rung the soldiers’ lusty cheer
That the retreating crowd could plainly hear.
They fly no more—they pause—and now they turn—
Scorning to wait the Saxon’s strength to learn—170
Since fight they must why should they wish to know—
They dash at once upon the coming foe,
Who meets them midway on the verdant plain,
But cannot their impetuous shock sustain.
The ocean warriors were led by a chief 175
Who looked more like a god than Norman thief :
Under his conduct oft had strife been won,
Although his manhood had not yet begun.
His eyes glanced boldly as the lightnings play,
And then were flashing terribly as they. 18
Fierce as a demon, as a giant strong,
When gleamed his sword the sinking heads among,

Death called him as he saw the carnage heaped,
The best that ever at his harvest reaped.
His desperate charge first drove the Saxons back ;
But they recovered from the rash attack, 185
And closed around his band. The rising sun
Might see how fast the bloody work was done.
Four times their number, and as strong and brave,
Nought from the Saxon could the Norsemen save ;
Though long with trumpet voice and rapid might,
The youthful chief upheld the failing fight. 191
The magic raven of Öreyda drooped ;
Among the Saxon foes that banner stooped.
The Norman leader rushed to Ivar's aid,
But Ivar's life is for Öreyda paid— 195
He grasps the banner and its bird revives ;
And they who dared profane it lose their lives.
Vain, vain, his prowess ! fast around
His bold Bersærkir sink upon the ground :
Who scorn to flee are by the Saxon steel 200
Bereft of all their wild demonian zeal ;

And soon the chief is left alone to woo,
With what his slaughtering soul and arm can do,
A death which shall assign him as his own,
The loftiest seat by Odin's awful throne. 2
So strong the hope, on his delighted eyes
Valhalla's shield-roofed towers half arise :
Its blushing maids in robes of glittering white,
Who fill the golden cups with nectar bright
For comrades slain in battle by his side, 2
And all who in the shock of bucklers died ;
Its magic steeds and its congenial sports,
Its blissful revels and its star-paved courts,
Glow on his sight, and such mad strength inspire
That e'en his foes his wondrous deeds admire. 2

Well may the war before his face consume ;
Stern Hilda flies above his floating plume ;
The goddess bold protects his glowing form,
And on her golden shield takes Gondol's storm.
The chieftain deemed the Valkyr waited nigh 2
To bear his war-doomed spirit to the sky ;

And when he saw the arrows glance aside,
Unto the radiant maid in wrath he cried :
“ Hilda, why fly these shafts of death afar ?
Am I unworthy to expire in war ? 225
What ! wouldst thou lure my soul to Hela's hall ?
Away ! I perish now despite of all.”
Loud laughed the demon virgin at his wrath :
He raised his sword to drive her from his path ;
But ere he struck, a hundred Saxon hands 230
Obedied their monarch's merciful commands.
Though almost maddened at the numbers slain,
The king from present vengeance could refrain ;
For in his youth a pirate he had been,
And all too much of heathen folks had seen ; 235
Far better than his own he knew the creed
Which with his rugged soul so well agreed.
He wot the chief would welcome glaive or dart
That pierced on battle field his hope-proud heart ;
And therefore called above the clamorous strife,
On those around the youth to spare his life ; 241

He bade them rush upon him one and all,
And with united force his might inthral.
The angry guards their leader's hest obeyed ;
The Viking for a moment was dismayed : 24
Cursing their mercy, which he knew too well
Was prelude to a death more slow and fell,
He struggled not ; but soon with dauntless air,
Prepared to suffer what he needs must bear.

Great was the joy, the praise, and the acclaim, 25
Which hailed the conquering king as back he cam
With those brave warriors who had wrought amend
Restoring wealth and rescued captive friends.
Parent and child may now embrace again ;
Nor shall the lover seek his bride in vain. 26
The danger o'er, now bold deeds come to light,
Which none had marked mid hurry and affright :
What had been done, they said, well vengeance knew
Yet there remained some work for her to do :
The Danish captives—there their savage chief—
Can that be he ? They scarce can force belief 26

To look upon that proud and beauteous youth
As monster without reverence, dread, or ruth.
The vengeful insults they had thought to cast,
Are all forgotten while the pageant passed. 265
But who as thou, Edgiva, was amazed ?
And who as thou upon the captive gazed ?
His large dark eyes from which defiance broke,
His ruby lips which scornful pity spoke
Whene'er the rabble raised exulting shout 270
Which sunk as oft again in fearful doubt—
His snowy brow, his heavy raven locks,
His lofty bearing which all triumph mocks,
The graceful beauty of his god-like form,
Impress upon thy soul no fleeting charm. 275

“ Cannot,” she muttered, “ e'en his coming doom
Chase from his rosy cheeks that steadfast bloom !
He looks as if this were some festal day,
And not the time for terror and dismay.
I'll not believe the fiend can e'er possess 280
A form of such surpassing nobleness :

My father's fury blinds him to the truth ;
And he will spill the blood of this fair youth,
Without remorse, for deeds he hath not done,
Before his hapless life is well begun." 285
Him to the dungeon now the guards convey ;
With aching heart Edgiva turns away
To think upon his fate, his prison's gloom
Which must so soon be changed for the darker tomb.

The day passed on : to mock the thought of pain,
The Northman prisoner sung in Skaldic strain, 291
The deeds of Thor who bore the deadly mace,
And warred upon the giant Utgard race ;
Of Baldur good, and of the king divine,
The boasted head of his heroic line : 295
He sung of Northern warriors brave and strong ;
And boldly sung at last his own death song.

HILLDAR-LEIK ; EÐA HIÖR-DRÁPA.

I.

“ I spent not my youth in the safety of home,
But was borne on the sea through its white-wreathing
foam

To the coast of the stranger ; and I tasted his blood,
And bore off his wealth on the high rolling flood : 301
Ere seventeen summers had passed o’er my head,
The lives of a hundred my falchion had shed.

I have fought with my sword, I have glutted the
hawk, 304

And the ghosts of my slain around Hlorrida stalk.

II.

The battle I love and the glitter of steel,
And the warm rush of blood when the foeman
doth reel,

And the fire from the helmet which the bright blade
can strike ;

Though struck from my own it is welcome alike ;
The rolling of light, and the rush of the foe— 310
O who for dull peace would their rapture forego !
I have fought with my sword, and the raven I've fed,
And the brave from my brand to Valhalla have fled.

III.

“ No virgin I love, for the battle's my bride ; 314
While it yields such delight I will have none beside.
I have laughed at the maids who have rushed to my
arms

From the lust of my warriors to shelter their charms ;
They came not in vain, but I wished them afar,
For their beauty belongs to the valiant in war.
I have fought with my sword, and the vultures have
flown 320

Along my red path with their dainty food strown.

IV.

“ The battle I love—in its warm ruddy tide
I bathe my strong limbs as onward I stride.
O, why did not fate doom my death on the field? 324
With a hundred red wounds I would fall on my shield,
And shout out my joy with the last gasp of breath,
As I felt the cold clasp of the goddess of death.
I have fought with my sword; but the wolf shall no
more
Follow after my track to rejoice in its gore.”

Thus from his lips wild music flowed 330
Till weariness unconscious calm bestowed.
No vision rose red from the horrid fray,
To fright sweet sleep from his closed eyes away :
He slumbered softly as a wearied child
Whom banks of blooming flowers have beguiled

To sport with fragrance till the sweet repast 336
Sinks him among his lovely mates at last.

Day long had fled the western hills beyond,
And night had touched the zenith with her wand,
And in her death-fraught spell had earth inclosed,
Still sleep on Vali downy chains imposed. 341
Yet must he wake—from yon barred entrance, hark !
What echoes wildly through his chamber dark ?
Can such soft servitude his sense intral
In spite of that deep groan and heavy fall ? 345
Ay ; yet may turn the dungeon's massive bar,
And the unwilling door with grating jar,
And on his prostrate figure faintly beam
The slender taper's gloom dispelling gleam,
Still, still he feels oblivion's balmy weight, 350
And rests like Vala at dread Helheim's gate.

A man approached whose wild unearthly face
Was suited to the drear and noisome place,

And showed most grimly as he raised the lamp,
Which burnt but feebly in the dungeon's damp, 355
And strove to look the ambient darkness through
Which veiled the chieftain from his eager view.
Albeit his eye betrayed a youthful fire,
His hair was grey and coarse his scant attire,
Naked his nervous limbs and brawny bust : 360
A sheathless dagger in his belt was thrust,
With crimson painted to its very haft,
And dripping even yet its mortal draught.
Soon as the fettered sleeper he descried,
He crossed the floor, and kneeling by his side, 365
Bent down and whispered—"Wake, young chief,
awake !
I risk my life and others' for thy sake.
How sound thou sleep'st ! nay then"—He gently
pressed
With bloody hand the captive's heaving breast ;
His night-born peace the touch that instant broke,
And Vali as an angered serpent woke ; 371

Like glittering sword that threatens the breast to pierce,
Flashed bright his eye with warlike spirit fierce :
Though his a soul incapable of fright,
The ruffian started at their sudden light, 375
But then remembering what delay might cost,
He promptly said—"No time may now be lost—
I come to save thee—rise—but question not
Till I have brought thee to a safer spot."

He rose—he recollected yesterday, 380
And followed as the other led the way.
As they past out, beside the dungeon door,
He saw the guard lay weltering in his gore,
And deemed it proven that his giant guide 384
Was some stanch friend in whom he might confide ;
Yet nathless marvelled he what moved the heart
Of that rude Saxon thrall to take his part.
Through doors and secret passages they passed,
And gladly breathed the open air at last : 389
The slave glanced keenly round the moonlight space,
And then proceeded on with rapid pace

Until he reached the borders of a wood,
Where fastened to an ash two chargers stood.
“Rejoice, young chief!” he said, “light work remains:
Here will I free thee from those cumbrous chains, 395
Which cripple worse than Elli:” Pausing, straight
He lightened Vali of his fetters’ weight;
Then spoke again—“Now faithful be and frank;
What is thy name, brave youth, and what thy rank?”
“Munja it is in boundless Gardaland, 400
Jumalan mies upon the Finnic strand;
With Sviar, Vænnygg; Othran, with the Dane;
And Örnavin with comrades on the main:
These titles I have earned by deeds in war,
At home in Noreg it is Elaár. 405
Yet Vali is my name; I am a king;
And he shall joy who loosed the eagle’s wing.”
“Enough—now mount—one hindrance have we yet,
Though gentler far than any we have met.”
They sprung upon their steeds; away they rode 410
Along the path which radiant Máni showed.

Edgiva still stood by the old oak tree,
Though wearied hope appeared about to flee :
Her lover now was lost beyond her aid,
And she herself perhaps had been betrayed. 415
Thus every fear that likelihood could vaunt,
Thronged in her mind its lingering hope to daunt.
“ They come,” she cried ; and now indeed they came,
Urging their coursers to the speed of flame :
They paused not till before the blushing maid 420
His headlong steed each mighty rider stayed.
They lighted both and came beneath the oak ;
And thus the elder to Edgiva spoke ;—
“ Lady, each wish of thine as this be blest !
I have obeyed thy dangerous behest ; 425
I scarce had hope, yet gladly would have died,
Since thou on Oscar’s daring hadst relied.”
“ O talk not so ! I know thy task was hard,
But as I promised here is some reward.” 430
She oped a golden casket which contained
Gems rich as ever robber’s touch profaned :

"Take these, brave Oscar, and my thanks sincere."

"Thy thanks alone—Ay, keep thy brilliant gear ;

It cannot grace a fairer form than thine,

And could not mock a rougher shape than mine. 435

Yet, Princess, though I have a face uncouth,

To friends like thee I have a soul of truth.

Kind hast thou been to me thy father's slave,

And at thy bidding I would slay or save :

Yet know I am a Norman—I disdain 440

With Saxon gold this willing work to stain.

Persuade me not—my home may Náströnd be

If I accept the slightest gift of thee !

Vali, my prince, this lady's love hath shaped

The means by which thou hast from death escaped :

Shall I say more ? my rigid lips were loath : 446

Do as ye list ; I ween I know ye both."

This said, with what of grace he could command,

The stubborn giant kissed the maiden's hand,

Turned from the pair, and mounted on his steed, 450

Watched for the foe, and waited Vali's need.

“ Fair princess, thou hast freed thy country’s foe ;
Will not thy father’s anger work thee woe ?
I would not take my life at such a price,
Were this bleak earth your Christian paradise. 455
Many of Midgard’s maids I have beheld,
Whose beauteous forms Ljósálfaheim’s excelled,
But never met, though kind they were as thou,
Daughter of Embla I could love till now.
My ships are by the coast—O fly with me ! 460
And thou shalt find a home beyond the sea,
Which the spoils of many a royal palace fill,
And countless thralls obedient to thy will.”
“ Fear not for me ; no danger now I brave ;
Suspicion will alone light on yon slave : 465
For thee, young prince, it is I fear ;
Soon will they hunt for thee both far and near—
Hark, hark ! they come ! now must we part—”
“ Farewell !” he cried, and clasped her to his heart—
“ Farewell !” and pressed her rosy lips—“ Again
We meet if there be pathway o’er the main.” 471

They parted : she in hope, fear, and delight,
Stole to her couch to spend the sleepless night ;
And he, attended by his faithful guide,
Sped fast as the descending torrent's tide, 475
And reached at morn a distant rock-bound bay,
Where still his warlike ships in secret lay.

END OF ARI OK DÛFA.

PART SECOND.

SJÖFNARILLSKA.

SJÖFNABILLSKA.

Mær er mer tíðari,
Enn manni hveim
Ungom í árdaga.
Ása ok Alfa
Þat vill engi maðr
At víp samt sem.—*För Skirnis, st. vii.*

I SING the days of battle, blood, and crime ;
No strange event in that adventurous time
For Love to seek a rude uncertain nest,
And lodge content in Danger's very crest.
With fair Edgiva peril only sank 5
The rapture deeper that her spirit drank,

As oft the thunder storm's refreshing shower
Gives deeper hues and fragrance to the flower.
A sea-king of the north Edgiva loved,
Who on the billows of commotion moved ; 10
The warlike fury of his cruel breast
Fed aye its fire and spurned the thought of rest :
Like some young angel lost to world of bliss
Who had resolved to wreak his woes on this,
He seemed to fly from thought through ways of blood,
And scorn the very dangers that he wooed : 16
It was but seeming, for that heart possessed
No wish for vengeance which no foe distressed.
From heathen gods descended (such his pride)
He scarcely thought himself to man allied. 20
His sire from Odin sprung ; his mother's stock
Was of the giant king Utgardelok :
His snowy skin, his bright and blooming face,
His shapely form, declared his Ása race ;
But magic dark which Odin could defy— 25
The Jötna spell spoke from his jet-black eye :

His raven locks, which clustered as they fell,
Held waving charms no Runic could excel ;
Yet the weird letters on his Galldra vest
Could swerve the barbed arrow from his breast, 30
And Runes upon his dazzling shield combined
Could strike on battle field the coward blind.
Beneath his angry glance the peasant shook ;
He knew his weal was blasted by that look :
To love the unearthly sweetness of his smile 35
His most malignant foeman could beguile.
Such might gave men to Vali in their talk,
Nor sought the Viking such report to balk ;
Though this he heard and more in Skaldic lay,
He hid contempt and cared not to gainsay. 40
He saw the weakness of the vulgar mind
Was awed the more by powers undefined,
And so was willing superstition's wand
Should aid his sword to keep his hard command
O'er spirits wild, his mad Bersærkar train, 45
Whose frenzied valour helped his ocean reign ;

And spread his fame from polar shadows dun
To lands that wither 'neath the scorching sun.

Blood from his sword on Finnmörk's snows had
sunk,

And deep Great Bláland's thirsty sands had drunk
The dark red tide from sable breasts that gushed 51
When Vali and his band to slaughter rushed.

O'er ruthless Northmen had that youth a sway
Which stilled like fate the fury of the fray ;
If he willed war—with trumpet tone he spoke, 55

And demon wrath from each Bersærkar broke.
His bidding was enough ; in that they heard
The conscious voice that victory conferred.

Too frequently he lavished precious spoil
On those who joined with him in Hilda's toil : 60

For ever was he followed by a brood
Who looked to rapine for a livelihood ;
And well it was that the Valkyrjor oft
Were sitting on their winged steeds aloft,

To wonder at his helmet-cleaving skill ; 65

Ready to shield their favourite from ill ;

Albeit they found him perfect in their sport,

And longed to clasp him in Valhalla's court.

Loved by the Æsir and the sons of Hrym,

He little recked what danger threatened him. 70

So sang the bards ; and oft the harp was strung

That to the fame of noble Vali rung.

Though he believed not every idle tale,

Yet on his willing credence some prevail :

He was a leading spirit of his age, 75

Superior to its senseless sons of rage,

Whose lives on earth like dreadful meteors fled,

They cared not how so that the path was red.

Their dark persuasion ne'er had Vali held,

Had not his pride each reasoning doubt repelled ; 80

He felt such strength within him that he deemed

Himself still greater than as yet he seemed ;

The efforts of his soul surpassed his kind ;

His pride mistook his own immortal mind,

Aspiring after things above this earth, 85
 As certain proof of his celestial birth.
 Although his feet as yet on Mannheim trod,
 Bright Asgard was his home, himself—a god.

* * * * *
 * * * * *

Old Mundilfari's child was tired indeed :
 "Arvak," she cried, "and Alsvið, slack your speed !
 And bathe your burning sides in ocean's wave; 91
 And I will rest awhile in Glenur's cave:
 He waits me there; and had he his desire,
 For ever would it hold his maid of fire.
 I trust ye not, nor shall be long away, 95
 Ye dangerous steeds that drag the car of day !
 I yet must hie to Muspell, for our globe
 Shone not so bright to day as Surtur's robe ;
 He hoards his gold, the tyrant—chary too,
 My darling steeds, of fiery food to you. 100
 True, true, I have provoked him—well I wis
 He soon will grant these wants to Soel's kiss ;

The dreaded monarch loves his child of fire ;
In his embrace, would other maids expire."

Soel was gone : the steeds began their play ; 105
Ægir and Ran beheld them with dismay :
Dread Maelström's rage and Kraken's thunder snort,
Were peace compared with their tumultuous sport :
The frightened waves before their nostrils shrunk,
And to their coral caverns mermaids slunk, 110
And listened trembling to the dreadful roar ;
But sated soon the sun-steeds gave it o'er,
And shook their golden manes along the skies,
Filling the west with evening's rainbow dyes.

Thus Bragi sweet inweaved with quaint design,
His sacred lore to paint the day's decline. 116
Hushed was his harp ; for ages hath it slept ;
And now its strings are by a Christian swept.
Forgetting oft whose fingers press its strings,
It calls the past back till on him who sings 120

Its bold, wild, deep, resistless tones prevail,
And tell he must some ancient heathen tale.
The mild of faith may at its music carp ;
Less sweet than awful is the northern harp ;
But, ah ! its power scarcely knew control, 125
When 'twas the nurse of every Norman soul,
Who brooked not his cold country's narrow bound,
But fitter home upon the ocean found—
Who made each land he passed a place of woe,
And when his youthful fury ceased to glow, 130
Threw not his dinted sword and helmet down
Till they had bought a sceptre and a crown.
Forgive me, that I sing such pagan strain ;
It ne'er can have its evil sway again,
And it may teach that nought is half so dread, 135
As wickedness to some high virtue wed.
Now shall my harp its voice to softness bring,
That of the gentle I may also sing.

Beneath the oak again Edgiva stood,
And marked how fast the shades the sun pursued ;

Before the roses in the west could fall,
A black cloud rose and hid them like a pall.
She loved to see them slowly drop their light ;
It boded ill this sudden frown of night.
Some peril sure hath kept her youth so late ; 145
She loves too much to flee, yet fears to wait ;
In danger's spite too often have they met ;
Some cureless woe may cancel all the debt.
Some Saxon chief her lover may have crossed ;
If so, she knew one life was surely lost : 150
From threatened strife ne'er Vali stood aloof—
How vain these fears ! for, hark, a distant hoof !
Joy fills her heart—it is her lover's steed,
For who, save he, rides at such fearful speed.
Far faster than grey Sleipnir Odin bore 155
Away from Mánagarm's deep mouth of gore,
Came Vali on, nor checked his headlong course,
Till by the oak he bounded from his horse.
“ Vali,”—“ Edgiva”—words on either tongue—
To his impatient arms the maiden sprung, 160

And for a moment bliss was all she knew ;
Yet from his fervent kisses she withdrew
Those honied lips, whence mild upbraidings came,
And bowed her lovely face that blushed for shame :
But, ah ! the timid glance whose melting light 165
Was full of love, betrayed the hypocrite.
The rapture now her gentle bosom felt
Repaid for all the pain that there had dwelt.

O, what but lover's lips can love express,
Melting each syllable with tenderness ? 170
What but their eyes ? and much the conscious glance
That sinks for joy, such language can enhance.
This sweet exchange which wealth to love supplied —
All this I must pass o'er and much beside,
Because my harp is harsh for such a theme, 175
And my rude touch can scarce its fault redeem.

Although his accents sounded so sincere,
Edgiva harboured still a baneful fear ;

Yet found the heart to make in soothing tone,
The torment of her anxious bosom known, 180
When Vali laughing bade her still prolong
Her chiding sweeter far than Bragi's song.

“ Sayst thou my voice is sweet? ah, much I doubt—
Far dearer yet to thee the battle's shout!
Thou sayst I am beloved, but dost not tell 185
That demon Hilda is beloved as well.”

“ No, dearest maid ; I loved the battle strife,
But thou hast changed the tenor of my life :
Now rather than the angry host of men,
I seek some still and solitary glen ; 190
Or waste the dreamy day in Álfar-shades,
Watching the sport of their alluring maids ;
And mark whene'er they turn their smiles on me,
How ill the Huldrafolk compare with thee !”

“ Hast thou,” the maiden said, “ then learned at last
To gaze on aspects of a gentler cast, 196

Too wild for words : I laughed at nature's war ; 215

My soul was fiercer than the scene by far.

Let fate my frame with half this strength endow—

Then mark my wrath, I said—how strange ! for
now

I love the starlight lake, the lulling stream,

The prospect softened by the moon's faint beam, 220

The lovely vale o'ergrown with flowers sweet,

Where I have built for thee a fair retreat,

Which thou shalt grace through Lofna's granted
power,

And I will prize Edgiva's summer bower,

Above the proudest seat in Odin's hall, 225

Or any throne that Asgard holds withal,

Save one Ljósálfar keep in our behoof,

Beneath eternal Gimli's golden roof ;

For that with me thou shalt for ever share,

And joy with them whom Ragnarök shall spare. 230

Yes, I am changed ; a flinty heart was mine ;

Yet it hath been, Edgiva, soft as thine

Since first I clasped thee to my grateful breast,
As shrieking maidens oft in war attest."

"May I believe this, love? indeed I will: 23

It is such joy to think so—something still—
Thee from thy heathen worship could I woo,
And with the love of Christ thy soul imbue,
Then Death might come, and though he pierced m
heart,

Without repining I would kiss his dart; 24

For God would pardon all thy daring crime,
And we should meet in heaven another time:
Oh, listen to his word, and thou shalt know
Thy gods are angels whom he cast below!"

Edgiva found her speech had been too rash; 24
Her lover's eyes betrayed a fearful flash
Of that wild spirit which his better strength,
Strove to control, and did control at length:
The radiant wrath in softened brightness died;
The flush passed off, and calmly he replied— 25

“Thou wrong’st me, dearest, by such slight esteem ;
I am not so unknowing as I seem ;
Nor all unlearned in thy Christian lore ;
Albeit I love our Northern legends more :
For many scrolls penned in that polished tongue
In which the worship of thy God is sung, 256
Fell in my father’s hands with other prey ;
I had learned all our lettered rocks convey—
All that our Skalds and Sagamen recite,
And longed to read old Róma’s songs aright. 260
A southern slave imparted what I sought,
And much of varying faith and worship taught.
I prized the treasures, read them o’er and o’er,
And as I grew I added to my store ;
For in your convents, knowledge, beauty, gold, 265
Are stored away convenient for the bold.
The ancient Romans many gods avow ;
And then they were more eloquent than now,
And braver too. Their gods, how weak ! for none
Of all the host but fell before thy one ! 270

Odin laughs at thy peaceful God, and I
Daily in deeds his utmost power defy ;
Oft do I see his worship, priests, and shrine,
For being hang upon a word of mine—
Thou tremblest, love ! then hold what faith thou
wilt; 275

But mention my belief no more as guilt.
To worship weakness seems to me disgrace ;
So thought thy sires of Baldur's beauteous race,
Who still scorned danger, death, and Hela's hall.
Till Róma caught them in her crafty thrall, 280
And then they lost their valour : well I trow
That even thou wouldst Hervor's spirit show,
Rung not these monkish doctrines in thine ear
To blight each noble thought with slavish fear.
As Hetha in Bravalla's carnage stood, 285
And bathed her beauty in the foeman's blood,
With crested helm upon thy lovely head,
And glittering shield, and sword both bright and
red,

Might I but see thee, fair as Valkyr sent
To soar with souls whose earthly hours are spent !”

“Thou dost not wish it, Vali—jest not so ; 291
Such baleful joyance canst not thou forego ?
Though mounted on a Valkyr’s gold-hoofed steed,
I could not gaze below to see thee bleed ;
Soon terror’s hue my visage would o’erspread, 295
And I should fall to earth among the dead.
This form of weakness doth it suit the fight
More than my coward soul could bear the sight ?”

The Viking laughed and said—“Yet have I seen
A virgin of slaughter in armour sheen, 300
Whom I believed a foeman brave and strong,
While our conflicting blades sang terror’s song ;
But when my sword her helm had cleft in twain,
And she lay wounded on the bloody plain,
I knew my prostrate foe was Kjartan’s dame, 305
And looked upon my nothing work with shame.

Cursing my wrath which ruthlessly had felled
Beauty that Hela's fury might have quelled,
I knelt in pity by the warrior's side,
And strove in vain to stanch the welling tide. 310

In sooth to me it was a woful task,
And would have been to any son of Ask.
The dark-eyed Finna's spell-encompassed form
That e'en in death retains illusive charm,
The night-born queen who wooes the sons of day 315
To her embrace to quench their souls for aye,
The blue-eyed Nordfrú with her breast of snow,
The southern maid whose limbs like Gerda's
glow,

Never of half the beauty seemed possessed
That died with her that drooped upon my breast ;
And since that hour no other shape hath shown 321
Such perfect loveliness save thine alone."

"She perished then?"

"Yes ; soon my arms upheld

But clay whence death that spirit had expelled

Which mild Valkyrjor bore to Freyja's car 325
That then was rolling o'er the wide-spread war :
Freyja of all the slain Sívella chose,
And with her prize to Fólkváng proudly rose.
Our northern bards say that the happy sprite,
As it ascended looked down on the fight, 330
And smiled to see me press the lips that then,
Alas ! could not return the kiss again."

" Ah, thou didst love her—"

" No ; her virgin fame
Had been too deeply stained with open shame ;
Her leman played so falsely in her bower, 335
That forced to wed him by her father's power,
The bridegroom at the festal board she slew,
And fled o'er ocean with a warlike crew,
Whom she to victory and plunder led,
Until my brand her soul to Freyja sped. 340
I loved her not ; we had not met before
The day she stabbed her youthful paramour ;
Though I applauded then her death salute,
And with my sword stayed vengeance from pursuit,

I loved her not—mid battle's horrent host 345
Our second meeting, and—the rest thou know'st.
For ever had I scorned the weak desire
That busy Sjöfna's melting arts inspire,
Had not thy peerless beauty taken part,
And taught my soul her softness of the heart. 350
Whate'er I wished for once, though heaven inshrined,
I won by my keen glaive if not resigned ;
Now must I often risk my life in vain,
Only to see the treasure I would gain ;
When full of hope to clasp thy Álfbright form, 355
Oft am I driven by the envious storm
On Valland's coast where Normen are enticed,
With snow-white garments to acknowledge Christ.
Now we have met, Edgiva, can I say
Time hath in store another such glad day ? 360
If to thy sire our mutual love were known,
Are not my hopes for ever overthrown ?
One moment is our secret so secure,
Or will Verthandi's smile for aye endure,

That we may rest content, or treat with scorn, 365
The generous offers of the transient Norn ?
No, no ; her sister weaves a thread of woe,
For every proffered boon that we forego.
Then listen, love ; a fleet is off this coast, 369
Whose meanest ship might be a monarch's boast—
With dragon beaks and sides with bucklers gilt,
Ne'er nobler ocean-homes Ivallda built.
Dashing the snowy foam from golden prows,
Like Sól when she on Ægir's bosom bows, 374
They shine so on the deep that Rán's red eyes
Shed tears of envy as she views the prize.
Each seaman is a warrior strong and brave,
As dreadful on the land as on the wave,
Chosen from the famed champions of the north,
A guard becoming thy surpassing worth : 380
They wait for thee—Ah, bid thy heart relent,
Edgiva, dear ! and sweetly grant consent.
Thy father—yes, I bear his well-earned hate ;
But, trust me, when reluctance proves too late,

And precious gifts of love plead for good will, 385
He will not—cannot recompense with ill.”

He urged his suit; Edgiva seemed as coy
As Gerda wooed by Álfheim's generous boy :
Though every hindrance that the maid could frame
His ready thought and flowing speech o'ercame,
And though her heart in truth now took his side,
And nothing lingered save some jealous pride,
She yielded not, but parleyed still a feint,
And murmured half sincerely this complaint—

“ Yes, Vali, Vali, much thy lips profess ; 395

The same devotion do thy deeds express ?

This land attracts thee, for its valleys hold

What lures the Northman from his mountain cold—

I mark thy scorn—then say it is not pelf—

Too base the thought—but is it all myself? 400

If so my guilt my soul hath understood ;

Each kiss of thine is bought with Saxon's blood—

Yet, stay ! bright maids each vale of England hath—

This eve why lingered Vali in his path ?

I ask again ; thy first reply was naught ; 405
And only on my quick suspicion wrought.
Thy messenger said thou wast on the way—
It then was noon—what caused thy long delay ?”

“ O wrong me not, Edgiva ! wide thy guess—
Though something loath, the cause I will confess.
Of marring fears our meeting needed not, 411
More than thy mind already had begot ;
So told I not what peril kept me back,
That I had left thy lover on my track—
At least he such appeared to rivalry : 415
Thy name, Edgiva, on his dying lip,
Stayed my uplifted arm—his very tone
The doating youth had copied from thine own.
A boy more beautiful thought ne’er conceived ;
My jealous soul had hardly been relieved, 420
When absent far from England’s wealthy shore,
Had I of such a wooer known before.
In love a rival, and in war as well,
No easy victim to the strife he fell :

On his own head his blood, for first he dared 425
The deathward struggle, first his falchion bared :
' I know thy face,' he said, ' thou dreadless Dane ;
Right glad am I that we have met again :
I saw thee once when fetters bore thee down,
Yet envied even then thy young renown ; 430
Not older than myself already thou
Hadst made old chieftains to thy conduct bow :
Thy fame was ripe before my tender hand
Could wield with manly force the warrior's brand.
Virgins and boys—who thought I felt the same—
My playmates trembled at thy war-spread name : 436
But emulation in my soul arose,
And ardour to avenge my country's woes :
As thou was first, young chief, to wake that zeal,
So shalt thou be the first its strength to feel.' 440
He ended words and proved his vaunted might ;
I need not tell the issue of the fight ;
He moved unwonted pity in my breast,
For though I stripped him of his jewelled vest,

His deep-trenched wounds with mine I deftly bound,
And laid him softly on a mossy mound : 446
A useless service that, for much I fear
His cure was only for the skill of Eir,
And death but mocked my labour.—Look, my love!
Thou didst admire that vest a Dyrgía wove— 450
I left it in my bark ; its magic dyes
Attract too many curious Saxon eyes—
Yet this my foeman's is as richly wrought ;
I have slain twenty men where less I sought.'

The moon which had been hid now gave its light,
And shone upon the sea-king's clothing bright,
Which fixed like basilisk Edgiva's look, 457
And her slight frame with sudden anguish shook.
“ How pale thou art, my love ! Whence is thy fear ?
My speech hath shocked thee ; why — thou dost
appear 460
As sad as maiden whom stern Syn upbraids,
From Vingólf's golden gates to Hela's shades.”

He said no more—nor did the damsel speak,
But sunk back silently with ashy cheek :
He caught her as she fell, but she had swooned, 465
And darkness with her absent soul communed.
Well that it did, for, oh, that light was keen
By which this cruelty of grief was seen !

He bore her in his arms with tender care,
Unto the murmuring brook, and kneeling there, 470
While she hung o'er his arm with death-like grace,
Sprinkled cool water on her lovely face.
Slowly the virgin's fearful sense returned ;
Her blue eyes opened and again discerned
Her wondering lover and his glittering dress— 475
She turned her head away in deep distress,
And struggled feebly with his clasping arm,
As if to fly the cause of her alarm.
“ Why wouldst thou break away in terror thus ?
Thinkst thou this braided garb is poisonous ? 480
'Twas got with blood—it is the way to wealth
I ever shall prefer to Christian stealth.

What! art thou weeping? Ah, I see the truth—
Thy dearer lover was that Saxon youth,
Whose recent blood is on the vest I wear— 485
It must be so—ay, well might'st thou forbear
To fly with one when many were so kind;
And him so fair to whom thy heart inclined.”

His words Edgiva heard as one who hears 489
Some idle sound when death's sure conflict nears;
The grief which in her soul had stood aghast,
Uttered its woe mid tears now flowing fast.

“O, cruel king! my brother thou hast slain!
Let not my father's only child remain,
But sheathe thy sword in this remorseful breast, 495
And let me by my gentle brother rest!
I ask no more—this should not be denied—
Alas! alas! though by thy hand he died,
Not thine the guilt—oh God, must I confess
That I—his sister—am his murderess! 500

I sought thy love—I drew thee to this shore—
Through me thy hands are reddened with his gore.
This deed will bring my aged father low :
My disobedience is punished now : 504
Home—father—God for thee I would have fled—
First falls Heaven's judgment on a guiltless head ;
And keeps its juster wrath for me in store
That I may dread it longer—feel it more.
O Edgar, dearest Edgar, little thought
Thy sister that the garment which she wrought 510
With secret care to wake thy glad surprise
Dyed with thy life-blood thus would shock her
eyes !
My bosom pressed it on thy breast at morn—
Pressed it at eve though by thy slayer worn.
Is mercy dead ? or hath my guilt's excess 515
Made even her so stern—so pitiless ?”

Thus she lamented ; and her heart-wrung grief
Found in such wild reflection small relief.

Vali was used to sights of woe like this
Since nature woke that sinful life of his ; 520
Breathing mid slaughter, fire, and ruthless sack,
His soul had almost grown demoniac ;
Yet when Edgiva's anguish he beheld,
Emotion in his hardened bosom swelled ;
For well he wot these wages he had earned : 525
The sword on which his heart relied was turned
Against him so by Fate that though he dealt,
The keenness of the blow his spirit felt.
The sea-king for the moment was unmanned
As if the form of that Almighty hand, 530
Enshrouded oft but never yet aloof,
Revealed itself to him in this reproof.
It held not long, for soon a prouder mood
His rising doubt and sympathy subdued :
He saw his hopes would like a vision sink 535
Unless he firmly stood upon the brink :—
He saw—and he despaired not to prevail ;
With what he loved at stake he could not fail.

His calm self-will which deeply, inly burned,
His instant thought, and potent speech returned ;
But yet the mourner would not be consoled, 541
And seemed to every word of comfort cold.

“ Oh show me where he lies ! there will I weep—
Nay, stay me not ! there is not one to keep
The wolf or prey-bird from his ghastly feast— 545
Be merciful ! oh, grant me this at least ! ”

“ Far hence,” he said, “ thy hapless brother’s corse ;
There go not now to rave with vain remorse.
A doubtful hope I have—the lingering breath
Remains oft though all wear the hue of death ; 550
I thought of this as o’er his form I bent,
But could not wait to weet if life was spent.
Oscar is watching by Werloka’s mere,
Lest hostile step unheard approach us here :
He must away, and, if the youth survives, 555
Shall bear him gently to the herb-skilled wives

Of Vængis-hjört ; for, trust me, they will cure
Before the wisest leech thou canst procure.
Alive or dead, I must not dare restore
Thy sire his son until my stay be o'er ; 560
For if the monarch knew what hath been done,
There would I wis more lives be lost than one."

"Is there yet hope? haste then," she cried, "oh
haste!

For death is in the moments that we waste."

She had not said before the chief was gone, 565
And she was left beneath the oak alone ;
The low night wind her yellow ringlets stirred
As breathlessly she listened ere she heard—
A call—an answer—all awhile was still—
Sounded a courser's hoofs upon the hill— 570
Far up the vale where Silence stood concealed,
And sent the noise back from her mystic shield,
The clatter struck : but faint at length it grew,
And Elaár's returning step she knew.

With gentlest touch her death-cold hand he took,
And fixed on her pale face an earnest look 576
Whose vital radiance spoke the unhallowed spell,
The nameless power of which she knew too well :
Look up she durst not, for she feared—she felt
Its tender magic would her purpose melt : 580
Already weakened was her chastened will ;
Faster than honey-dew from Yggdrasill
Sinks softly through the night-subjected skies,
The tear-drops started from her downcast eyes.
Maiden, beware ! nor listen to his speech ; 585
That low sweet voice will nothing holy teach ;
It is the tone in which false Odin spoke
When he the heart of gentle Gunnlauth broke.
Too late it is to flee—too late to shrink—
Each word he utters is a charmed link 590
Of Vilmeith's darkly folded demon lore,
To bind thy soul to him for evermore.
Thou striv'st in vain thy swelling love to hide ;
It is too strong for grief, or shame, or pride :

Thy brother he is dear as life can be, 595
Yet dearer far thy lover is than he,
And thou hast owned it, for thy tearful face
Is hidden in his sheltering embrace,
While beats thy heart against the haughty breast,
That wears, alas ! thy brother's blood-stained vest.
Is there such subtile sweetness in his kiss 601
That thou, rash maiden ! hast forgotten this ?

Fast time hath flown ; now part the lovers must ;
To meet again to-morrow eve they trust,
For then will Vali in the valley wait 605
To tell Edgiva of her brother's fate.
Both left the vale, and she was forced to chide
Before the daring youth would quit her side ;
Her royal home built on the sloping fell,
Was full in sight ere he would say farewell. 610

PART THIRD.

ÁNGURBODI.



ÁNGURBODI.

Seið hon kvnni,
Seið hon leikin ;
Æ var hon ángan
Illrar pióðar.—*Völuspá, st. xx.*

THE sea-king stood beneath the oak in thought ;
A sudden change was in his spirit wrought ;
Feeling and faith he could not reconcile,
And much he muttered in his heathen style.

“ Daughters of Dvalinn ! what hath roused your
wrath ? 5

How durst ye lead such foe across my path ?
Ye were his death ; yet had it not been known,
Ere this Edgiva had been all my own ;

But I have blabbed like Alvis—now the light
Betrays my nature to her startled sight! 10
And will she fly with me? for life confide
In him through whom her only brother died?
I knew him not—if I had known, my pride
Would scorn like nothing soul my work to hide:
Let life, love, faith, and fame—let all betray— 15
No deed of mine shall ever shun the day!
Christians may prate—no blood in battle spilt
Can stain the hero's wreath with hues of guilt;
The soul in danger's joy to heaven that fled,
Will thank the arm that freed it from all dread. 20
In this belief the sword is still my choice.
O'er chieftain slain in war should all rejoice;
His ruddy death to Gladsheim speeds his ghost:
Of Vali's fall his foemen yet shall boast;
All tread the path of Fate; and why repine? 25
The Nornir shall not mark my soul decline,
Though young Verthandi hath no smiling brow;
And Skulda—once so bright—is frowning now.

I know all things on earth must have their term ;

Tears will not soften Fate, nor scorn confirm. 30

Many on Skulda's gifts too surely count ;

Many too fondly weep by Urda's fount :

Youth slights the homely sweets that rise around,

And thinks more fragrant far will yet be found :

With sinking soul, weak frame, and failing eyes, 35

Age for the apples of Iduna sighs.

O youth, clasp now each joy while sweet is left !

And, age ! forsake a world of bliss bereft !

Give not to Hela though thy feeble breath,

But mount to Odin from the field of death !" 40

Thus spoke the pagan ; yet it must be told

That doubt had nathless shook his doctrines bold ;

Though his wild soul too deeply they imbued

To be by less than power divine subdued.

Awful are noble minds by faith undone ; 45

Oft they who might be like the genial sun,

Resemble light torn from its golden shroud,

Entwined about the heavy thunder-cloud

To dart down suddenly and brightly wreath,
Like hanging serpent, some doomed wretch beneath.

He made his couch beneath the spreading oak ;
And said as he arranged his wolf-skin cloak—
“ Blood - nourished tree ! thy roots shall rest my
head,

For much as thine my vigour hath been fed ;
Perchance it had been better for us both, 55
If other food had fostered our wild growth.”

His thought beguiled itself in varying chase,
And then to darkness for a time gave place ;
His opened eyes once more beheld the scene
On which the softened moonlight sank serene ; 60
He wondered what foundation had the tale,
That gave such grisly phantoms to the vale,
If the deep-sunk oak engirt a narrow cave,
Some ancient heathen warrior's fiery grave ;
Then thought grew wilder—fainter—till at length
His soul from mild oblivion gathered strength. 66

How strange ! the frame Death's semblance can re-
store,

Though Death himself would hold it evermore !

When consciousness returned, the sea-king's sight
Dwelt long in doubt upon a scene of light: 70

A hall immense whose beauty far excelled

Earth's kingly homes, astonished, he beheld :

Its walls of gold were hung with jewelled shields,

And swords, and spears such as a monarch wields ;

The roof of swelling clouds supported by 75

A thousand rainbows arching bright on high,

Showed the changeful hues of heaven struggling
there,

To look more bright, more various, and fair.

Though brilliant still its colours soft as night,

Made the expanse as grateful as 'twas bright ; 80

To the lofty roof transparent vapours clung

Which through the gladsome air their fragrance flung,

And countless happy stars sung through each wreath

That fell in folds the blushing clouds beneath.

Ten thousand thousand Álfar light-imbued, 85
With glittering wings each perfume's life renewed ;
Some boldly plunged into the ductile roof,
And fought their way through its ethereal woof,
Or sunk their lovely forms in vapours while
Their faces looked below with rosy smile : 90
But as the frolic ceased, the clouds composed
Their ruffled beauty and fresh tints disclosed.
Along the hall were countless tables spread,
At which a mixed assembly drank and fed :
Young blooming warriors in resplendent gear, 95
And virgins of the shield devoid of fear,
Were mingled at each gorgeous festal board,
Where white robed maidens sparkling nectar poured,
And pressed rich viands on the dauntless guests,
Obeying with delight their bland behests. 100

He heard the joyous pledge and song resound,
And from the golden walls the laugh rebound ;
He saw the light of joy on every face,
And Vali knew it was no earthly place.

Kneeling beside him were two maidens fair, 105

With sun-like helmets and with golden hair

Which fell in ringlets o'er the polished mail,

That bound their shapely necks and bosoms pale :

Half raised, he turned on them his searching eyes,

Until their cheeks blushed like the morning skies.

The virgins spake at last with downcast look—

“ Vali in sleep from rocky couch we took,

And bore him in our arms to Vingólf's towers,

And long he slept 'mid Fólkváng's heavy flowers ;

Now that in Sessrúmnir his dreams have flown, 115

We would conduct him unto Freyja's throne.”

The Viking heard ; and, starting on his feet,

Exclaimed in turn—“ I would with guides so sweet,

Dare Hela's shades—to visit Vana-dis,

In such companionship were double bliss.” 120

Up the long hall and through a scentful cloud,

Which round the dais like rich incense flowed,

They led the youth, and left him there alone,

Kneeling before the proud Ásynja's throne.

He saw that child of Njörd whose beauties boast 125
The powers that move, and melt, and ruin most ;
(For if they meet the gaze of mortal wight,
He pines for an impossible delight ;
Within him ever burns the wasting fire,
Though Hela mock at last his mad desire) 130
Yet bowed before that throne the ravished king,
Round which the everlasting roses spring,
Where with eternal lilies sweetly blends
Each dewy flower whose loveliness transcends ;
About its ruby sides the flowers coil, 135
Yet are to Freyja's charms an humble foil ;
For what can boast below, or what above,
When in the presence of the Queen of Love ?

“ Arise ! ” the goddess said, “ I might claim thee
Because thou hast slept under the sacred tree 140
Which men miscall an oak—a tree of ill ;
It is a branch of holy Yggdrasill.
I wave my right, and would with prayers move ;
Without thy love here dangerous thou wouldst prove :

What swells thy veins when battle hath begun ? 145
 The fiery current of the Furious One :
 Therefore unwise are they who rouse thy ire ;
 Thy friendship and assistance I require,
 And sunk in sleep thou wast on pinions mute,
 Borne from the earth to hear my anxious suit. 150
 I ask thy aid against our mutual foes,
 Who now are moving from their northern snows,
 And 'gainst the vengeful race of Hela dire,
 And radiant Surtur with his sons of fire.
 They come ! the Ása chiefs on Vígríth's plain, 155
 By Loki's frightful brood and Fate are slain !
 Shall Freyja be possessed by monster base,
 Or die in Surtur's horrible embrace ?
 My valiant warriors are in Odin's hall,
 And follow him at Heindall's trumpet-call ; 160
 Were they with me, nought would the host avail ;
 Here all but mystic might will surely fail ;
 Thou art possessed of that—then let thy sword
 To Freyja's joy-lit halls defence afford !"

She ended as she clasped him in her arms, 165
And trusted to the pleading of her charms;
Her soft embrace the sea-king could not shun ;
She was resistless, and her cause was won.

Yet spake the Queen—"The hour is nigh at hand
When thy weird strength must wield the magic
brand— 170

Not that thou wear'st, but one that I will give,
On which no man save thee can look and live.
It was my brother's, but he rashly gave
The priceless treasure to his daring slave,
Who ventured into Gerda's fire-bound bower, 175
And forced the haughty maid by Runic power,
To yield his master in dark Barri's grove,
Her kindling charms, and grant the kiss of love.
Bold Skirnir kept not long the sword of Frey,
Which of itself can like the levin slay ; 180
He gave it me—but why thou must not guess,
Content that thou the weapon shalt possess.

Whate'er my crime, 'tis not for thee to blame,
 For thou shalt reap great honour from my shame.
 Behold the falchion ! bind it on thy thigh, 185
 But draw it not until the danger's nigh.
 The throng whose joyance echoes in this hall,
 Know not how soon these terrors will appal :
 Why should they ? worse than useless is the grief
 Which brings not to the mourner some relief : 190
 I therefore from this revel hide my fear ;
 Nor shalt thou, Vali, scorn my festal cheer :
 Now pledge me in this cup of ruddy wine !" .
 She said and raised it to her lips divine,
 Then gave it to the youth who took the cup, 195
 And full of inspiration held it up—
 Ere from his lips one syllable had pass'd,
 The throne was shaken by a trumpet-blast—
 " Whence comes that sound ?"

" Too well keen Heimdall knows, .
 Who on red Bifröst's arch the signal blows : 200

Yes, yes," cried Freyja, "'tis the Gjallar-horn !
It sounds aloft all Asgard's race to warn,
It strikes the boldest Æsir with dismay,
And speaks the period of their bliss for aye !"
The rosy veil of clouds, as thus she spoke, 205
Before her shuddering throne asunder broke—
On the pale face of every reveller there,
In that wide hall, was stamped such blank despair
That they appeared like wretches who had been
A thousand ages with Elvidnir's Queen: 210
But Vali was not daunted like the crowd;
He loved the danger, and he called aloud—
" My friends, why are ye startled thus ? to me
That trumpet speaks alone of victory !
If any Jotun break through Odin's host, 215
My charmed sword shall end his fatal boast.
It is our task to guard the Queen of Love ;
Woe to the warriors that recreant prove !
They ne'er again shall banquet in the hall,
But batten with the cattle in the stall. 220

Renew the revel, heedless of alarms,
 And drink with me—success to Odin's arms !”
 He quaffed the wine the golden goblet held,
 And with his confidence their terror quelled.
 To the brim Valkyrjor filled the cups anew ; 225
 Each guest to Odin drank and Vali too ;
 Each bound his fulgent mail upon his breast,
 Assumed his shield, and spear, and nodding crest,
 And stood arrayed for battle's fiercest shock,
 And all the fiery woes of Ragnarok : 230
 That they had now begun they knew too well,
 Who heard its rushing sound and endless yell.

In came the gentle Hnossa, deadly pale,
 And told with trembling lips her fearful tale :
 “ I stood with Heimdall on the ruddy bow, 235
 And saw the giants on the plain below—
 To Vígríth still the frightful throng repair
 From the hollow bosom of dark Nagelfare—
 At Hymir's heels stalks Fenrir fierce and grim ;
 No other wolf may Odin fear but him ; 240

The heedless Fates have fixed their changeless laws,
And destined Odin to the monster's jaws ;
And now his flaming fangs and leer malign
Betray his vengeful thirst for blood divine :
There Loki too I saw, his cunning sire, 245
And Helheim's horrid shapes that howled in ire.
I fled as hideous Jörmungand's vast length
Came rolling onward in its poisonous strength.
I saw the Ása-army sally forth,
And mount their steeds, and gallop to the north ; 250
Odin, Frey, Vidar, Heimdall, Týr, and Thor,
In dazzling gold, led heroes to the war :
O'er the Einherjar's heads flew to their goal
The radiant virgins Guda, Thúda, Göll,
Herfjötur, Hilda, Skögul, Skulda, Mist, 255
Hlökk, Randgríd, Rota, Reginlief, and Hrist :
But as the Æsir neared the fatal plain,
Fenrir and ghastly Garm shook heaven amain ;
Its bright blue concave with their rage was rent,
And Surtur's sunclad host rushed through the vent,

Strong Bifröst broke as down its steep they pressed ;
 Its glittering fragments fell on Hlódyn's breast. 262
 I fled again—no longer could I bear
 The fire and poison that spread through the air.
 Faint—faint I feel—this is a withering hour— 265
 What burns within me ? 'tis the venom's power :
 I fear the serpent's breath hath reached my heart—
 Yes, yes, it hath—ah, mother, we must part ?"
 She ceased and fell, but Vali's saving arm
 Received the Vana-virgin's lifeless form. 270
 Poor Freyja wept ; her tears of liquid gold
 Upon her daughter's snowy bosom rolled,
 When she perceived the maid had truly said,
 That Odur's peerless child indeed was dead.
 Her hopeless grief the hardened Viking moved, 275
 But other feeling soon his breast behoved.

The sound of conflict swelled on Vali's ear ;
 He knew the conquering demons now were near.
 Flashed from its spell-wrought sheath the Vana-blade,
 And blighting runes around his buckler play'd ! 280

At his command the gates were open thrown,
And all the secrets of the deep were shown :
Followed by an exulting giant brood,
Before them in the vast old Hymir stood.
The clouds his golden sandals wet like dew ; 285
Among the stars his waving plume he threw ;
His eyes were like two suns that deserts parch,
Each looking from beneath a rainbow's arch ;
His massy spear whose shadow Midgard crossed,
Its head deep in eternity was lost ; 290
His vast blue shield seemed like the vaulty sky
From the horizon raised and hung on high ;
He spoke—like crushing worlds his voice's tone :
“ Freyja ! the Ása-host is overthrown,
And thou to Jötunheim must hie with me ; 295
My icy home hath need of one like thee.”

“ Back, back,” cried Vali, “ to thy snowy wold !
Or this keen blade shall render thee as cold :
No icy plain or mount will Freyja seek,
At the proud bidding of a phantom weak.” 300

“ Ha ! daring youth,” said Hymir, “ on my spear
In rolling anguish thou shalt yet learn fear.”
Descending like a meteor, the Jötun’s lance
Was levelled at his breast, but Vali’s glance
Spoke nought but scorn, and with a sudden blow
He severed the weapon of his lofty foe ; 306
Then raised on high his wonted battle-shout,
And at the head of Freyja’s festal rout,
Charged boldly on Örgelmir’s monstrous race,
Who fled where’er he turned his war-flushed face.
Before his arm fell many a towering shape, 311
Ere the dismayed Hrimthursar could escape :
Vidolf and Bölthorn felt the slender steel
So deeply that no skill their wounds could heal ;
Bergelmir toppled like a huge old oak 315
That falls beneath the sturdy woodman’s stroke ;
Hrymur eluded death by subtle sleight,
And seemed a vast grey stone to Vali’s sight ;
But mighty Hyrrokin came on with speed,
Riding in wrath her serpent-bridled steed : 320

Vain was its howl, and vain the vipers' hiss,
And vain the Ima's ponderous strength I wis ;
The Runic glaive pierced her dark bosom through,
And did all Mjölnir threatened once to do.
Logi evaded Vali by a cheat, 325
And ran along a fire before his feet ;
Well Hugi proved that hour his matchless pace ;
Though fast the cravens fled, he won the race,
And vanished in the rising smoke that now
Ascended from the burning world below. 330
All disappeared—but Angurbodi came,
Alone and pale, through the wide-waving flame ;
Fixing on Vali her dark evil eye,
She spoke with mocking smile this prophecy—
“ Vali, thy warlike ships approach the shore— 335
They perish mid the ocean-tempest's roar !
Njörd frees the blast, and Ægir swells the waves,
And Rán shall stow thy gold in coral caves ;
Who scape his net at morn that wretched few
Shall dye old Ymir's blood its ancient hue. 340

Thou dreamest, youth, and yet thy dream is sooth—
 Awake ! proud mortal, wake ! and find it truth.”
 She ended as the heavens with awful sound,
 Fell flaming with them both to Midgard’s ground.

He woke amazed—the vision all had fled— 345
 A storm was raging wildly o’er his head ;
 The oak which such for ages had withstood,
 Was riven at last by the lightning’s vivid flood
 Which still flung through black clouds its fiery crest,
 Like glittering sword thrust through an Ethiop’s
 breast : 350

Though Vali was unscathed by its fell force,
 Breathless beside him lay his sable horse ;
 And horror reigned—yet nought appalled was he ;
 “ Be Vala cursed,” he cried, and for the sea,
 Beneath a sky with dread commotion flushed, 355
 O’er rugged rocks and hills he headlong rushed,
 And stood ere long above the sounding strand
 Where spirits of the storm rolled to the land

The giant waves, and howled upon the blast.
Vainly for his ill-omened vessels cast 360
The chief his anxious eyes 'round the expanse,
While lasted luminous the levin's glance :
Yet shrieks were on the air—he thought he knew
In them the voices of his aidless crew. 364
Grief, rage, and madness—each by turns possessed
His ardent soul, and each alike distressed.
The time had been when Fate he could defy,
And smile beneath such black tumultuous sky ;
He loved—and loving—thought he scarce could fear—
His life, success, and friends, were doubly dear. 370
When hardly 'gainst his guilt one virtue beamed,
Love from their grave of darkness some redeemed,
And many others must be rescued thence,
By the benignant hand of Providence.

To stand he had to bend against the storm, 375
While the lightning flashed around his haughty form
As if the sun had then been placed on high,
To melt itself and flood the ambient sky.

Still as the storm on terror's wings grew wild,
 His soul dilated and his voice reviled : 380
 " 'Tis fearful this—but when my soul is shook,
 Then boast, ye elements, your power ! ah, look !
 The lightning's touch like Midas king of old,
 Turns all th' air into atmosphere of gold !
 The concussive crash of thunder o'er my head, 385
 Did dumb my voice, but now away 'tis fled
 With heavy murmur. Yet again the feud
 Of light and darkness fiercely is renewed—
 Aha ! how beautiful that sheeted flash !
 Its central hue received of blood a dash, 390
 Which glowing spread like gentle maiden's blush—
 Yet will I speak, ye thunders, though ye crush
 Against my heart ! Slack not your torrent rain
 And wounding hail till ye your purpose gain !
 Boast not my frienzy, for returning cool, 395
 My thoughts shall calm when peace again shall rule !"

Soon was the fury of the tempest o'er ;
 Slowly away the winds the storm-clouds bore ;

Like Peace the moon moved in the solemn height ,
And blended with reluctant gloom its light. 400
The sea-king with the tempest ceased to rave,
And muttered thus as he glanced o'er the wave—
“ ‘ Awake and find it truth ’—I have marked nought,
Unless it were those sounds my fancy wrought—
Away ! I have but felt a dreamer's fears, 405
Like a sick maid awoke at night in tears.
I'll back to my flint bed, and will not wake,
Though like yon rolling sea the vast earth shake.”
He spoke ; and from his eyes glared sullen will,
As if his mandate slumber must fulfil ! 410
Yet soon he couched beneath the blasted oak,
All fresh and ghastly from the thunder's stroke ;
And spite of troubled thought, sank into sleep,
Serenely soft, refreshing, void, and deep.

END OF ÁNGURBODI.

PART FOURTH.

S Ó L A R S P Á.

SÓLARSPÁ.

Kostir ro betri,
Enn at klaucqva se
Hveim er fúss er fara.—*För Skirnis, st. xiii.*

OLD Mundilfari's child in fresh array,
Stood in her flaming car with smiling day,
Who clasped with his white arm her burning zone,
And pointed down to Vali's couch of stone :
“Look, Soel, look where Freyja's darling sleeps
On Ymir's bones, although Skinfaxi sweeps 5
With his broad mane of gold each shred of gloom
Into dark Nifelheim's eternal tomb !

On Vali's bosom hath Night's foaming steed
Dropped dew which sparkles bright as Heidrun's
mead ; 10

And, see, by Yggdrasill, the nurse of time !
As our approach dissolves the early rime,
The rugged vale around the youth appears
As though 'twere filled with Freyja's golden
tears !

That spot hath changes breaking nature's law, 15
And not the strangest is this brilliant thaw ;
For oft Vindloni grim and Svásuth sweet,
Like brothers in that sacred valley meet ;
Drear Vasad's son clasps his refulgent friend,
And their contrasted locks together blend 20
As snow and sunbeams ere on Hlódyn's lap,
Or flakes that sparkled in Ginnúngagap.
But mark what stood so long the stormy blast—
The magic tree hath bowed its head at last
What mightier charm hath Odin's spell subdued ?
To him that sleeps beneath this bodes no good ; 26

His evil Norn is bending over him :
Although to thine my foresight be but dim,
I deem ere night the youth will feel the weight
Of deadly doom from that dark slave of Fate." 30

Soel replied—"Thou needst not cut a rune,
Nor with old Mimir's head or Skuld commune
To guess at that, for look at yonder shore
Where two sunk wrecks the waves are rolling o'er!
Above the green and foaming surge is shown 35

The gilded dragon beak of one alone,
Which looks like Jörmungand's bright scaly crest
As I have seen it rise from Ocean's breast.
They once were Vali's vessels that we scan,
Though, as thou seest, they now are gone to Rán : 40

See, too, the wretches on the rock-bound strand—
All of their crews that reached alive the land :
And they would rather be again afloat ;
How busy are they with their leaky boat !
They mark the Saxons gathering on the height, 45
And would embark in their disastrous plight,

Rather than taste the mercy of the foe
Like that which men to wounded wild beasts show.
The Norsemen labour hard, but much I fear
The Saxons' hour of vengeance draweth near. 50
That envious Norn doth Vali's sleep prolong,
Lest he should scatter far the mustering throng;
The will I know she hath if nought withstand,
Him slumbering to betray to the Saxon band
Before a warlike wound be given or got, 55
So that his soul may fall to Hela's lot :
But I will lend my aid to Freyja's right,
And scare away yon shadowy shape of night
That holds her darling in its weird embrace,
And breathes a drowsy vapour on his face." 60
Bright Soel turned and took a Muspell spark,
And darted it against the Jóta dark,
Who started as it pierced her dusky side,
And looking up to the smiling goddess cried—
“ Ha, Glenur's spouse ! fast doth thy chariot roll ;
Somewhat the faster for the fear of Sköll : 66

High up the cope the grisly monster climbs
 Who yet shall feast upon thy glowing limbs."

She said ; and laughing sank into the earth,
 And well she did, for her malignant mirth 70
 Had purchased else a fiery death before
 Old Járnvid's sons slake their hot thirst with gore.

* * * * *
 * * * * *

The sea-king started up, and wondered why
 His sleep had been so lengthened 'neath a sky
 Lit with the radiance of the car of day, 75
 That had advanced far on its lofty way.
 He gazed around him, and the past arose
 To break the peace begotten by repose :
 He thought of yesterday's unhappy deed ;
 He looked upon his thunder-stricken steed, 80
 Which with the shivered oak above his head,
 Reminded him of what the Vala said.
 When he had felt each woe that would appal,
 Uprose his soul superior to them all

As the Einherjar slain in daily strife, 85
 Rise at the banquet's call to hardier life.
 Youth is so strong in hope and dauntless pride ;
 What strength like theirs can stem misfortune's
 tide !

Our hero's heart with higher courage beat,
 On knowing all the peril he must meet ; 90
 And even as Sorrow thought her work nigh done,
 His soul rose like the North's mid-summer sun.
 Calmly his thought dwelt on his threatened weal,
 As he sat down and made his slender meal :
 That done, he rose and hastened to the shore, 95
 To clear his mind of doubts that yet it bore.
 He walked above the strand until he gained
 A height whence an extended view obtained :
 Then saw that chief a sight which made him
 start

Like lion snared by some bold hunter's art : 100
 Death-still he stood one moment to behold
 All that the Vala of his dream foretold —

A wreck with shattered masts he knew his own
By the bright beak that o'er the waters shone ;
Around the serpent prow the billows played, 105
And sport of every gilded fragment made.

One ship was sunk beyond his vision's reach ;
Its tale was told by tokens on the beach ;
Above its parting timbers wrathful foam
Upon the backs of mighty breakers clomb : 110
The sea had evil burdens borne too long,
And cast them now in rage the rocks among.

Although he saw them too, his sudden pause
Than losses on the wave had other cause ;
Upon the beach, around a stranded boat, 115
The Saxons his half-famished warriors smote :
The Norsemen with whatever came to hand,
Against the peasants made a desperate stand ;
Yet naked, wearied, and outnumbered, they
Seem to the rugged thralls a certain prey. 120

But Vali's shout was heard above the sound
Of men's and ocean's war that raged around :

Scarce through the space the trumpet-tone had rung,
Before the sea-king down the cliff had sprung ;
One moment more, and his bright Völund blade 125
Had on the beach a lifeless Saxon laid.
Fast fell the hinds beneath the flashing brand,
Pouring their life-blood on the ruffled sand :
Astonished at his deeds, the Saxons weened
The ocean-chief some mighty heathen fiend, 130
Who rushed in wrath to shield his pagan brood,
For faithfully performing rites of blood ;
And overpowered by superstitious dread,
The rustic throng before the Viking fled.
But many sunk beneath his falchion's sweep 135
Before they could ascend the craggy steep ;
For even up that he drove his hot pursuit,
And sent some wretches gasping to its foot.
In him the vengeful fire so fiercely burned
That loath his sateless soul from slaughter turned,
And slowly he descended to the band 141
That welcomed him with shouts upon the strand.

They met their godlike chief with greetings rude,
Which spoke not half their heart-felt gratitude ;
For not a Swede, or Dane, or son of Nor, 145
Among them revered Ygg or Auku-Thor,
More than they did the youth whose single arm,
Like lightning had consumed the peasant swarm—
Sigfadir's son himself ! whene'er he fought,
There was such wonder in the deeds he wrought,
As to proclaim him of no mortal strain,
And Jarls were proud to combat in his train,
Deeming that death in his array bestowed
A warmer welcome in his sire's abode. 154
He recked not of their thanks or their applause ;
Few were his questions, short his thoughtful pause :
The Nornir offered but a meagre choice,
And soon his band heard his commanding voice :
“ The slaves have fled, but what of that, my men,
Another foe soon wakes the strife again— 160
He rather than the feast will battle seek,
And for the slain an ample vengeance wreak ;

His old and war-strung arms can death-blows deal ;
Whilere your valiant fellows felt his steel,
When they in Sköggul's iron garb were clad, 165
And ye are weaponless—I would be glad
To wipe the stain of their defeat away,
But Odin gives not victory to-day.
Ye must in that frail vessel once more dare
The treacherous deep—but never launch it there :
Rán hath enough already ; would ye yet 171
Pass where the greedy goddess spreads her net ?
Up, sons of Endil ! each for instant work,
And I will show you where no dangers lurk.”
The shattered boat the hardy crew conveyed 175
Where he saw that a passage might be made
Through surf that rose o'er either sunken ship,
As fearful as the foam on Fury's lip.
No slender toil was this ; and when the task
From time did only scanty measure ask, 180
A steel-clad band the busy chief espied
Descending as it could the hill's steep side.

“They come,” he cried, “now hear me and obey !
My sword alone the Saxon shall delay,
Till ye have left the land—embark in haste, 185
And when ye are upon old Ægir’s waste,
Make for the bay to which ye were to go,
When ye were thwarted by the wrath of Fro !
The Sjárfarörm is there with her bold crew :
I soon shall cut my way these horsemen through,
And reach the haven; but I must no more— 191
The foe comes down—he must not touch the shore.”
Thus Vali spoke ; and bounded o’er the beach,
And hid himself beside the rocky breach,
Through which the band above must singly wend,
Ere they upon the level sand descend. 196

When Vali saw who foremost ventured down,
A sudden paleness broke his darkening frown :
“And is it thou, O king? thy blood shall ne’er
Stain steel of mine.” His blade which had been bare
He sheathed again ; but still his gleaming eye 201
Menaced the ancient man as he drew nigh.

Seeing the pirates parting from the shore,
He had impelled his coal-black steed before
The heavy troop that down the rugged steep, 205
Were forced with care a broken path to keep ;
And soon the Saxon came abreast the spot
Where Vali couched—like bolt from Thrúdváng shot
The chief leaped on him with tremendous bound,
And hurled him from his horse upon the ground.
Firm in his seat the youth with skilful force 211
Wheeled the wild steed and urged his upward course :
Shouted the Saxons then their helpless wrath,
And hastened rashly down the dangerous path.
The sea-king drew his sword—that demon joy, 215
Which made it deep-felt rapture to destroy,
Rose at it always did when danger faced,
And strengthened as if Megingjardir braced.
Its ghastful tale his glaive began to tell ;
With cloven skull the foremost Saxon fell, 220
Another from his saddle lifeless dropped,
Another—ay, nor had its slaughter stopped,

But that the Viking's form such terror wore
His foeman's frightened charger backward bore,
In spite of bloody spur till footing failed, 225
And toppling o'er the steep, he was impaled
On pointed rocks below : his rider crushed
Beneath his weight, their blood together gushed,
And sought with winding course the yellow shore,
Yet hardened midway into darker gore. 230
Brave were the Saxons, but their boldest saw
This work of horror with some touch of awe,
And faltered as despite his upward way,
Their fellows fell beneath the scathful sway
Of Vali's steel as fast Mjöltnir's blows 235
E'er struck to earth Hlorrida's dwarfish foes.
Though sturdily a few withstood the chief,
Their strife was vain, and their existence brief.
So strait the only way wound up the hill,
Some had to cope with him against their will ; 240
But death and terror soon the pathway cleared,
And fast the more's broad summit Vali neared,

When from the sea arose a shout at last
To say the boat the surf had safely passed.
His foes were surely cheated of their prey; 245
Now had he but to burst through their array—
For life or death—as opened fate’s abyss—
He saw—he gathered all his strength for this :
Leaped from his glowing eyes a deadlier glare 249
Than dragon darts when braved in her black lair ;
Like light round Gerda’s bower his weapons flashed,
As up the flinty way he madly dashed.
He just had reached the hill top mid the storm
Of javelins flung against his giant form,
When deep into his charger’s raven breast, 255
From nervous hands two slender darts were cast :
Rearing in agony the steed fell back,
And rolled with its young rider down the track ;
Nor crags nor corpses stayed them—down they went
Until they reached the foot of the descent, 260
Where both beside the prostrate monarch lay
Whom Vali first had humbled in the fray.

Great was the victors' glee and loud their scoff,
And now they trod the pathway fast enough.
The steed had perished ; but the chief was found,
Stunned by the fall, and yet with scarce a wound :
They bound him promptly lest his slumbering
arm
Should wake again to work some fatal harm.

His vesture rich and grey hair stained with blood,
Upheld by others the old Saxon stood, 270
And gazed on Vali as his languid sense
Recovered from the shock of violence.
Though stern his look he had no will to boast,
The monarch felt that he was humbled most,
And owned the perfect form before him there 275
Seemed like that of an angel of despair
Felled by the red right hand of God alone,
For daring to assault his sacred throne.
The Norman woke to feel the galling bond,
To learn his fate, but never to despond ; 280

For soon a stubbornness of heart he found,
And looked with calmness on his foes around.
Red in his cheek, light in his dark eye grew—
And then the doubting king his captive knew :
His face was altered, but who could forget 285
That haughty smile in sudden beauty set ?

“ Ha, young destroyer, have we met once more !
This time we part not as we did before ;
I thought betimes to curb thy wild career,
Thou hast provoked a judgment more severe ; 290
Thy deeper guilt hath added to thy doom
More pangs on earth, more pains beyond the tomb.
Ay, such a death I will devise for thee
That thou shalt wish thy writhing spirit free,
Even though it must at Hela's table sup, 295
And quaff her sluggish handmaid's gall - filled
cup.”

He said no more, for Vali's steadfast look
In spite of pride his angry purpose shook ;

It told how much that man should be disdained,
Who scoffed because another's arms were chained ;
He felt the truth the scornful silence spoke, 301
And in his breast a worthier feeling woke
Which bade him pay that honour to the brave
Which they from noble foemen always have :
Yet slacked he not his watch lest fortune shape 305
Some sudden means to favour an escape :
Though guards and chains there were to stay his
 flight,
He feared to trust his captive from his sight.
The sea-king smiled at this—" He dreads my
 strength,
And fain would bind my limbs with Gleipnir's
 length ; 310
And he is right—I wait my time—methinks,
An that were come, I could burst Gelgja's links."

The eager peasants on the moreland swarmed ;
The king his band in martial order formed ;

He left a part to join the breakers' toil, 315
And seize upon the sea-king's stranded spoil ;
The rest he took with him to hold the prize
Which was far dearer to his vengeful eyes
Than all the glitter of the wealth could be
That countless wrecks have given to the sea. 320
Once more our hero was a pageant made,
As homeward moved the joyful cavalcade ;
Once more his beauty, youth, and fearless soul,
The praise and glory of the triumph stole.
Old men whose spirits to remembrance clung, 325
Said leaders were like him when they were young ;
The sons who doubted this were forced to own
A chief so strong and fair they ne'er had known :
Many a maid who heard that he must die
Forgot her dread in an unweeting sigh, 330
As she beheld the captive so serene,
With more of Love's than Battle's rugged mien.
The tidings spread : Edgiva had heard all
Before she saw her lover in the hall,

Fettered and guarded with that jealous care, 335
Which seemed to leave no refuge from despair.
Albeit her look unusual firmness spake,
Her cheek was pale already for his sake :
Her handmaids as she passed the captive chief,
Marked with surprise her sudden gush of grief : 340
'Twas well they thought thus for her sire to feel ;
But why such triumph to his foe reveal ?
Something the prisoner spoke—" The oak—at eve"—
The import of his saying none conceive
Save she alone to whom it was addressed, 345
Who strove to seem unconscious as the rest,
And hastened from the hall lest aught betide,
To show the love so hard for her to hide.

She found her father with his aged leech,
Flushed in his anger and impatient speech : 350
" Why, what a snail art thou ! thy blood is cold,
Else would it quicken even limbs so old—

Call'st that a wound ? how would my captive mock
Such care because I stumbled on a rock !

My captive—ay, but soon he breaks his chains, 355

If left to work his spell on Saxon brains,

Duller thine, and they are dull enow.

No, no ; I neither trust to them nor thou :

So do thy office with unwonted speed,

Or learn—the leech himself may leechcraft need.”

Thus spoke the king, forgetting in his chafe 361

Who threatens his physician is not safe :

One way that servant had : though old and true,

He could be obstinate and angry too,

And little recked what peevish humour swayed ;

He neither hastened for it nor delayed. 366

Edgiva's voice which had been passion's balm,

Inflamed the anger that it sought to calm :

The monarch's mood, engendered by defeat,

Was bitter still in spite of accents sweet : 370

With stern reply he stalked back to the hall,

To speak the death by which the youth must fall,

Whose guilt nor earth nor heaven might forgive,
And whom his wounded pride forbade to live.

Edgiva waited till the westward sun 375
Told her 'twas time her journey was begun,
Then o'er her rich attire a mantle threw
Of such a homely shape and sober hue,
That they who met her wist not that the dress
Clad other than some lowly shepherdess. 380
She barely reached the oak in time to hail
A horseman who was riding from the vale.
"Stay, Oscar, stay!"—the rider heard the sound,
Checked his rough steed, and vainly looked around.
"Who calls? my royal mistress, is it thou?" 385
"What other maid would venture hither now!"
"Ay, truly, thou wast born to be our Queen—
But tell me what these fearful tokens mean :
Where is my chief? not blasted by the storm,
Like yonder steed and oak? perhaps some charm—" 391
"Nay, Oscar, tell me first my brother's fate,
Then will I tell thee of thy chieftain's state."

“ Thy brother, though held long in deathlike swoon,
Though wounded deeply, will recover soon.”

“ I thank thee, God ! my guilt hath mercy met : 395

O ! that thou wouldst extend it even yet

To one who hath offended much I know,

But was in childhood taught to be thy foe,

And knows not who thou art. — Now, Oscar,
hear !

I have the worst of tidings for thine ear ; 400

Thy chief is captive, and my sire hath sworn

His frame shall feed the flames to-morrow morn.”

“ But how befel this, Lady ? ”

“ On this coast,

In last night's storm, two of his ships were lost ;

What men escaped our hinds began to slay, 405

But Vali scattered them like chaff away :

My father came with his unconquered band ;

Thy leader made a bold and skilful stand,

And kept the only pathway of the cliff,

Against his foemen till a shattered skiff 410

Bore his faint crew beyond the Saxons' reach—
Then—then was stricken senseless on the beach :
Ay, in the very moment of success,
He fell the victim of his fearlessness.
This morn spread to our gates the wild report ; 415
Ere noon I saw thy chieftain in the court,
His lofty form with heavy chains depressed,
And wearing still my brother's purple vest ;
That vest I wrought myself in secret bower,
And gave to Edgar in our parting hour ; 420
I only knew whom Vali had bereft,
Or there had been no pause ere mercy left.
Enough of this : I knew what thou wouldst say—
Blood shall for blood the debt of vengeance pay.
I will not hear thee—both are dear to me ; 425
Their mutual danger must their safety be ;
Not vainly will the king be prayed to spare,
When he hath learned an equal doom they share.
I cannot tell him—no, I dare not now,
In such an hour, my guilty love avow— 430

The cause of all—though humbled to the dust,
I will not own my shame until I must :
I would be spared ; but yet on this rely,
I will dare every thing ere he shall die.
Oscar, be thine the glory—thine to save 435
Two peerless princes from a timeless grave !”

She ended ; Oscar paused awhile in thought,
Then answered as a dauntless rover ought ;
No need had she to offer counsel that
Her sisterly affection shuddered at : 440
He saw at once the only course to take,
Nor long or idly of its promise spake :
He heard all that the princess had to tell ;
“ Fear not,” he said, and took abrupt farewell ;
And swift as down red Bifröst speeds the ghost, 445
Was borne away, and soon in darkness lost.

Before Edgiva could the palace gain,
Her handmaids had been seeking her in vain ;

The transient gust of angry passion spent,
The doating monarch for his daughter sent, 450
For fear his harsh repulse and speech unkind
Distressed too deeply her unhardened mind.
Of hasty words Edgiva did not reck,
Yet threw her snow-white arms around his neck,
Glad to relieve her soul so much oppressed 455
By weeping on her loving father's breast.
His darling hurt—albeit mistaken how—
He kissed her trembling lips and pallid brow :
But when he found her grief abated not,
With gentle force he led her to the spot 460
Where fast asleep his Norman captive lay
Upon the shaggy skins of beasts of prey.

“Edgiva, look ! is this not placid sleep ?
Yet hath this chief some cause to wake and weep,
For there are faggots heaped upon the lawn, 465
Whose flames shall redden with to-morrow's dawn,
Around the stake with which his fettered frame
Shall burn until their ashes seem the same.

I told him thus ; yet mark his soft repose !
See what a healthy hue his cheeks disclose ! 470
If he hath dreams, his smiling lips express
How full they are of heedless happiness :
But thou art overcome with grief, my child,
And droop'st like some parched lily of the wild,
Because my stern employ a moment lent 475
A harshness to my voice which was not meant.
A patient Christian thou ? thy tears forbear,
And something of this heathen's firmness share ;
His death with sigh or sob he will not shame,
Though naked he must suffer in the flame : 480
Such is the doom by holy men decreed
To one they deem of Satan's earthborn seed,
Lest woven charms with coolness cover him
When fire appears to wither every limb.
He fights by spell : what honest arm could hurl
A king to earth like an enfeebled girl ? 486
Else would I never give a shameful grave
To one so strong, so beautiful, and brave.

Now no beseeching—no, though breathed by thee,
Shall save this stately work of sorcery. 490

Tell me that limbs their infant whiteness keep,
Though braving oft the desert and the deep ;
That human might can look so soft, so fair,
Or glitter thus those locks of Álf-black hair,
And that his strength no wizard vitals feed— 495
No impious Galldur, or no loathsome Seid !

No, no ; the pagan arts too well I wot

To deem his power or aspect fairly got.

In war this chief hath gathered much renown,

Yet is his smile more dangerous than his frown :

Cold as thou art, Edgiva, to the crew 501

That with their amorous sighs thy steps pursue,

I should expect to find my dove had flown,

Were he once left to plead with thee alone.

But though his wish no maiden hath denied, 505

The youth is doomed to clasp a hideous bride,

If that be sooth which Sagamen recite

Of hapless Baldur's fate and Hela's right.

I have observed his sleep, and hope to trace
Some shade of horror passing o'er his face, 510
When Death herself, as is they say her wont,
In midnight vision rears her awful front
To tell with stern'st delight her destined guest,
He sleeps to-morrow eve on her dark breast :
How will he loathe that livid Queen's caress, 515
Who scarce would look upon thy loveliness !
Thou heed'st me not : true, 'tis an idle tale ;
And thou, sweet one, art weary, faint, and pale.
Well—wash no more the roses from thy cheeks,
With that salt dew in which thy sorrow speaks, 520
And seek thy couch—soft may thy slumbers be !
My blessing, child—nay, Heaven's rest on thee !”
Fearing to rouse her father's angry mood,
Her swelling grief the heart-sick maid subdued,
Met fondly his embrace and parting kiss, 525
And strove to smile—but could no more than this :
One stealthy look at her doomed lover cast,
And from the guarded hall in silence passed.

*	*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*	*

High in her chariot stood majestic Night,
 And guided through the gloom Hrimfaxi's flight :
 Although the darkest form she hath of all, 531
 From Utgard's icy bounds to Idavoll,
 She hath the loveliest shape of all that live,
 And greater power than Fate again can give ;
 Beyond the confines where the duergar stand, 535
 Already she extends her calm command :
 The transient life of Gods her years shall mock,
 And wide her reign spread after Ragnarok.
 How strong is Auth, her son ! how vast his hoard !
 How mighty too her beauteous daughter Jörd ! 540
 This borne to Annar, that to Nagelfar,
 Compare not with the child of rosy Ár ;
 He gives the flowers, fields, the ocean, skies,
 The world its soft and its refulgent dies ;
 And since by Hodur's spear good Baldur fell, 545
 Is loveliest of the Æsir out of Hel.

Night loves this dazzling son of her last spouse,
Yet seldom Fate an interval allows
For them to rest together from their toil;
And when Time hath unwound his wondrous coil,
Night to her brother Chaos shall retire, 551
And Day eternal rule o'er Heaven acquire.

Máni looked softly bright and sadly pale
As swarthy Night threw back her starry veil,
And said—"Why art thou sad, companion dear?
What bows thy spirit thus? Or grief or fear? 556
To Víðfinn who lamenting, hath implored
Thee many years, hast thou at last restored
Children who bind thy brow with halos bright,
And strike to earth the stars that dare to blight? 560
I know thee well—mild as thou seem'st to be—
His tears would soften Thaukt as soon as thee.
Or doth Hrodvitnir's son of late appear
To gain on thee, thou drooping charioteer?
From Hati will not come thy fatal harm, 565
For he must yield his prey to Mánagarm,

Who filled with every dying mortal's blood,
Shall stain e'en Odin's throne with the sanguine
flood—

But dream not, Máni, of expiring pangs,
For I can save thee from his gory fangs : 570
Fenrir, Gnipa's hound, nay, Jörmungand,
Would perish if once struck with this black wand."

Máni replied, " I thank thee, gentle Night ;
Deem not that I mistrust thy word or might :
The twilight of the gods will come at last, 575
Till then its shades shall not my soul o'ercast :
If aught of sorrow my dimmed looks betray,
'Tis caused by something that I now survey.
I once saw on a high Noregian hill,
Lovlier than Hjuka fond or Hvitabil, 580
A monarch's child whose locks were dark as thine,
Whose lofty brow in whiteness rivalled mine ;
His eyes gave light as I have seen thy glance,
Flashing a darkness through the void expanse :

He seemed an infant god lit on that height: 585
I coveted the boy ; and in my flight
I stooped and bore him off in hopes that he,
In time the bearer of my shield might be ;
But Fate forbade and forced me to resign
The youthful prince whom Ygg declared divine. 590
I loved the peerless Norman, love him still,
And would, had I the power, shield him from ill.
In yonder palace, mark, the Saxon chain
Binds him I speak of !—look upon the plain !
That pile that rises there will feed the fire 595
In which the youth to-morrow must expire.
I dare not rescue—Odin victory gave,
And Hela would be furious should I save.”

“ Who told thee this ? Or tell me,” Night replied,
“ Hath Mundilfari’s son but prophesied ? 600
How wise ye Gods are ! Skuld hath nought to do
Now that ye weave her wondrous texture too.
I’ll not gainsay ; though grieved am I to learn
That thine and Freyja’s darling there must burn ;

For he is of my race ; his locks, his eyes, 605
Took from unchanging Night their sable dyes ;
Whence else his soul profound ? for in its keep
Are secrets for which bartered worlds were cheap :
But he is doomed ; thou say'st it : now will I
In turn approaching wonder prophesy. 610
Look back ! behold upon the cloudy west,
The grey light now begins to faintly rest ;
And now a tinge of red presumes to peer—
Mark, I foretell a god ascending there !
Ay, see the ambient clouds begin to blush, 615
And cast upon the sea their brilliant flush,
And every dancing wave top smiling back,
Greets with the hues caught from the rosy rack. .
Sweet Delling comes ! Ah, see the rainbow flowers
That fall from his red car in brilliant showers ! 620
See, from his locks he shakes the diamond dew,
Which Skulda's snowy fingers o'er them threw,
As by deep Urdar-fount for omen good,
'Neath Yggdrasill his ruby chariot stood !

I tell thee, Máni, every sparkling tress 625
Drops to mankind some lasting happiness :
Though holy be the showers that distil
Into the valleys from high Yggdrasill,
They form but food for the discerning bee,
And tell not of a blissful destiny. 630
The ruddy east is changing into gold !
Now, Máni, hasten lest thy sister bold
Laugh at thy dim, pale face, with light oppressed,
Which breaks like lightning from her soaring crest."

Night ceased, for Delling's stately steeds came on,
Driving th' Duergar into caverns dun, 636
Who had stayed long forgetful of the doom
Of Durin's and Mothsognir's sons of gloom.
The youthful steeds with ardour onward press'd,
'Till they and dark Hrímfaxi were abreast, 640
Then Night leaned fondly from her awful car,
And met the warm embrace of blushful Ár :
Together rolled the chariots through the skies,
To Jötunheim where Njörvi's palace lies ;

Though daylight never visits that abode, 645
The sun on home so rich hath never glowed;
And Delling passes hours of deep delight,
In that wide dwelling with compliant Night.

They vanished in the west ; and then the scene
Received two other shapes of glorious mien ; 650
Amid the golden clouds in radiant pride,
Soel and Day ascended side by side,
In chariots whose hot steeds kept equal pace,
And shook their flashing manes with fearful grace.
Forms too effulgent they for human kind, 655
Whose looks would scorch their fields and strike
them blind :

Before them Svalin held an aureat shield,
And from each mortal eye their shapes concealed ;
The lightning of the cars burned through its gold,
And ev'n the eagle scarcely durst behold. 660
The bright companions had not run their race
Far up the cope before Day's joyous face

Assumed an angry and impatient look,
As if he saw some sight he could not brook ;
While to his ear, well nigh as Heimdall's sharp, 665
Arose a strain as sweet as Bragi's harp.

DAUÐADRAPA ; EÐA, HELJARVON.

I.

“ Though I feel like a god o'er his altar of fire,
Ye have gathered around me to see me expire :
Ye slaves of the cross ! if I shrink from the flame,
Ye may call me a nidding in spite of my fame : 670
Though my body through fire may surrender to
 death,
My soul is familiar with Muspelheim's breath.
I will smile as I die ; and bequeath ye that dust
Which my soul hath disdained and now leaves in
 disgust.

II.

“Come nearer ! still nearer ! a lesson I’ll teach 675
Far better than shavelings from Róma can preach !
Ye bastards of Baldur ! let every eye
Watch me close till the last and learn how to die ;
As a string of a harp may be broken in twain,
Though the minstrel be playing his merriest strain,
I will smile as I die, for the flame in my heart 681
Will but force the strong chains of my spirit apart.

III.

“Though portals five hundred and forty it boast,
I have sent to each gate of Vahalla a ghost,
Yet the face of All-father I never may see, 685
For Hela’s dark handmaids are waiting for me.
What care I for that ! the day shall yet come
When Baldur and I shall arise from the tomb :
I will smile as I die, for the Nornir ordain
That with Vidar on Ida, we ever shall reign. 690

IV.

Through the halls of drear Náströnd, whose wide
roof is made

Of spell-woven serpents, ye ever must wade,
While the flood of their venom on your faces descends,
And your limbs the gaunt wolf like Agony rends :
Your fair ones and high in Hvergelmir shall wail, 695
Where the king of the deep their bodies shall quail.
I will laugh as I die in the face of my foe,
For I wis he shall dwell in that mansion of woe !”

Day heard no more, such wrathful feeling broke
From his deep breast as thus to Sól he spoke : 700
“ What, Sól, dost thou preserve a bearing cold,
And yet the Saxons’ vengeful deed behold ?
See, to the stake our darling Vali bound,
While the exulting peasants gather round,
To shout the name of yonder gloating king, 705
Who sits in state to see the red flames cling

About that form now naked to his eye,
Whose beauty might with faultless Baldur's vie!
Canst thou mark this?—nay, if I make thee weep,
I will again my angry silence keep.” 710

Sól listened to this speech with drooping head,
Around her face her lustrous ringlets spread,
And fell below her flaming zodiac;
But when with sudden rise she threw them back,
And looked full in the face of generous Day, 715
He saw she only smiled at his dismay.
“My bearing cold!” she cried; “what son of Ask
Might safely nigh my present glory bask?
The fire those guards are kindling round that chief,
As waves to him, would bring my limbs relief. 720
Would'st have me weep for him? No tear was wrung
From Alfrauthulla when the Vala sung
The doom of Fate—that yet my fervent blood
Must glut the savage thirst of Loki's brood,

And shall I grieve for others?"

Day replied— 725

"And what supports thy firmness but thy pride?
Thou know'st thou must bring forth before thy doom
A child whose light shall open every tomb,
When she shall mount in her effulgent car,
And drive as thou, and look more lovely far." 730

"Well spoken, son of Night! Then canst thou
guess—

Since I subdue by pride my own distress—
No cause of calmness now but lack of ruth
For one so bright as yonder dreadless youth?
I'll tell thee such, and every word shall be 735
The echo of an act which thou shalt see.
For Fate's decree will in an instant speak—
There! heard ye not that long and thrilling shriek?
It is Edgiva, who with fearful gaze,
Sat fondly hoping till the faggots' blaze, 740
With its red tongues around her lover grew,
When rushing from her seat she wildly threw

Herself upon his breast, and there she clung ;
They tore her thence when that shrill anguish rung.
Ah, look how pale she lies ! her grief is fled— 745
Her lover surely deems that she is dead :
Fire burns within him though the pile be quenched ;
See how his mighty limbs those gyves have wrenched !
With all his strength he strives—again ! again !
And now, thank Odin ! he hath burst the chain. 750
Hearken that signal shouted hoarse and loud,
And mark that rush among the motley crowd !
Who close round Vali ? Are they Saxons ? no—
And that ere long the wolf-like warriors show ;
They quickly beat back the disordered guard ; 755
See—three lie wounded on the verdant sward !
Some free from chains their chieftain's limbs robust,
Some his weird garb and magic arms adjust,
Others the while hold that impatient steed,
Which Vali mounts equipped for any deed.” 760

“Why pause they now ?” exclaimed the son of Ár ;
“The hoary monarch rallies for the war,

A host whose battle shock that slender band,
Though led by Hilda, never could withstand,"
" Yet see," said Sól, " their chief alone advance,
Like a Bersærkar in his dreadless trance, 766
And hand a Runic missive to the king,
In spite of darts that 'gainst his armour ring :
The guard surprised their monarch is not slain,
From their assault half doubtingly refrain. 770
Look at the king ! a lesson of despair
He gathers from what he is reading there :
It seems his vengeful thoughts he must eschew ;
His son is captive with the sea-king's crew,
Who threaten, should they long their chieftain lack,
To carve an eagle on his shrinking back, 776
And other things which turn the old man pale
As his white locks that shiver in the gale.
This Vali marks ; disdaining the success
Thus built upon his aged foe's distress, 780
He tells him that his son is safe—is free
Soon as his men shall know of his decree,

And that his soul is not to him opposed,
As his fair daughter hath this day disclosed.
Thou canst discern now by his glowing cheek, 785
His love for her the youth begins to speak :
Well may he plead his wealth and kingly state
Proclaim him worthy of a royal mate ;
His regal home although in Noreg boasts
The treasured spoil of many southern coasts. 790
What think'st thou, Day, will yonder hoary sire,
Who lately saw with joy the rising fire
Around the sea-king, now such hate recant,
And to the youth his dearest treasure grant ?
I tell thee, ay ; fell though the hate he bore, 795
Because his pride was wounded to the core
By Vali's silent scorn, yet none admire
That chief whose looks such love or dread inspire
As he himself : now Vali stoops to sue,
Despite the many that his ravage rue, 800
Of many slain, and—this much more than all—
Despite the aged monarch's facile fall

Before his arm, and of his wounded son,
The sea-king hath his lovely daughter won.
Much is behind that stateliness concealed, 805
For know, that time-worn chief is proud to yield.
Now to his side is wan Edgiva led,
Weeping like Vana-dis and faint with dread ;
But soon his questions to her cheeks shall bring
A hue as lovely as the flush of Spring 810
When after lying dark so long below,
He rises blooming from his tomb of snow.
The joy shall yet be hers which shall endure
As though 'twere loath to leave a breast so pure :
Her love which hopeless seemed of good event, 815
Now favoured by her father's free consent,
Shall soon receive poor Edgar's kindly smile :
Stern Syn shall cease from her malignant guile ;
And thou shalt own upon their wedding day,
Gerda and Frey look not more bright than they.
Soon shall Edgiva with her Norman lord, 821
Depart across the realm of mighty Njörd

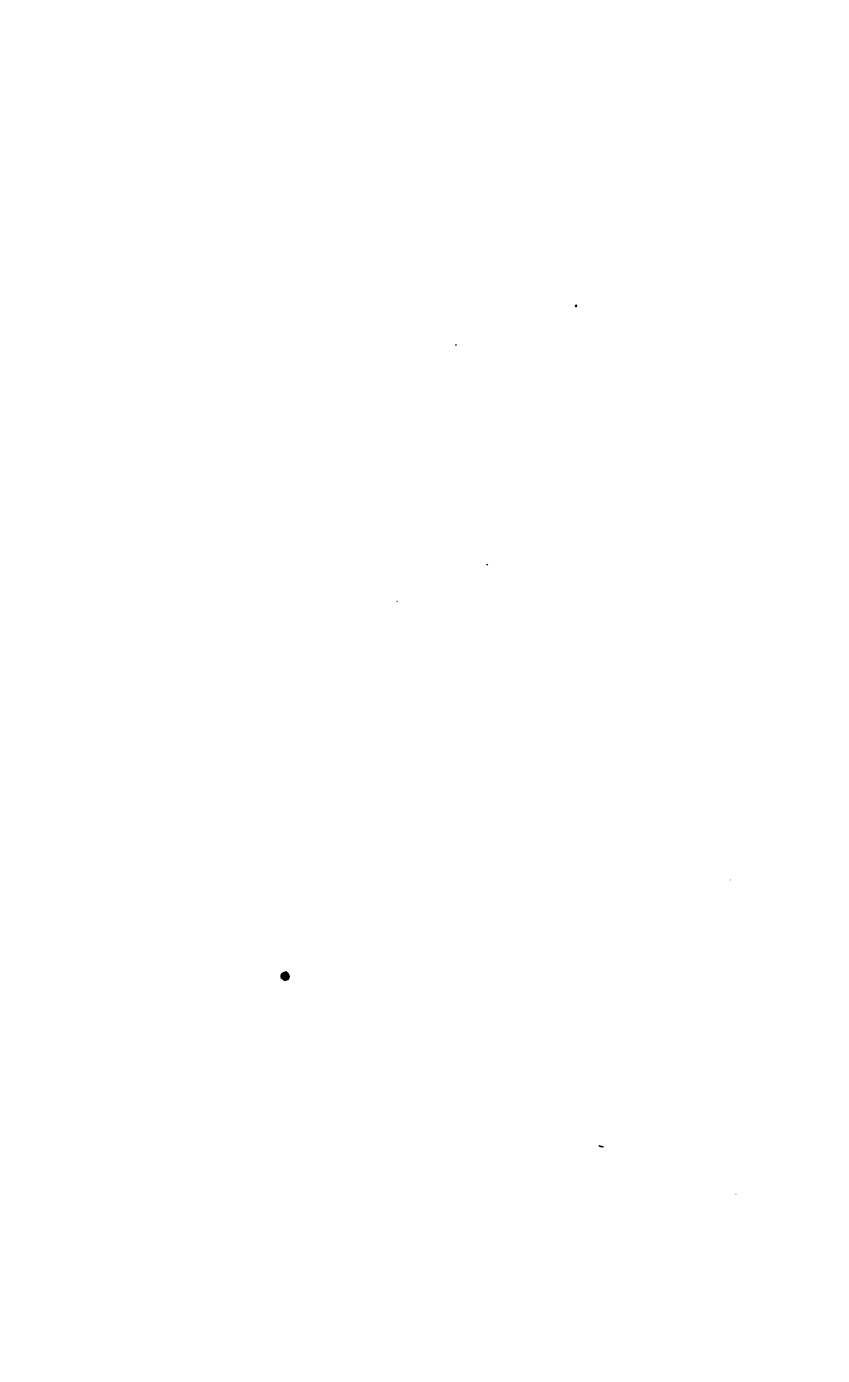
To Vali's northern home, where she shall live
As long and happy a life as Fate can give ;
And from her offspring there shall rise a race, 825
Whose men shall be the first in fortune's chase ;
By courage and by wisdom they shall soar,
And still be kings till kings shall be no more.

So much of fate last night Gothbódi gave
To me alone in Nida's starry cave ; 830
In truth I could not rest till I had won
Some knowledge of the way Skuld's weftage run :
And ask ye wherefore I could not dismiss
Their peril from my soul ? perhaps 'twas this—
The aidless pair the past brought to my mind 835
When Mani and myself with human kind
As Mundilfari's mortal children passed,
And lived awhile in bliss too pure to last.
Alfadir saw my element was fire,
And knew that Surtur was indeed my sire : 840

He made me in his wrath the slave of all,
To toil with my hot steeds soon as the call
Of the Einherjar's golden-crested bird,
Echoing from Valhalla's shields is heard,
Till Huginn and loved Muninn Mannheim quit, 845
And on the shoulders of Alfadir sit,
To whisper as he quaffs his ruddy wine,
What men or nations now their powers combine
To wrest from others some subsistence sweet,
Like Geri and bold Freki at his feet. 850
But think not I repine that Fate begot
For me a weary and exalted lot ;
No, no ; I know—I feel my work is good ;
Give me to bless ! I ask no other food ;
It rises from old Hlodyn's breast like dew, 855
And strengthens every languid power anew,
And all my burning soul in sweetness dips
As grateful as the wave to man's parched lips.
I perish—ay ; but when my life is done,
Who saith it hath not been a glorious one ?” 860

Communing freely Sól and kindly Day,
In radiant state thus clomb the bright blue way ;
Nor ceased their converse while their downward cars
Descended through wan troops of western stars ;
But when the wide-spread hues of evening flushed,
Hushed were their voices as my harp is hushed. 866

END OF SÓLARSPÁ.



EPTIRMÁLI.



EPTIRMÁLI.

Fýsumst hins at hætta.—*Krákumál, st. xxix.*

Spent was the vision which my lips have told ;
My head drooped o'er my harp of fairy gold ;
The moon's pale radiance fell on every chord,
And cast the semblance on the verdant sward ;
My eyes upon the shadowy strings I kept, 5
And watched their tremble as my fingers swept
Across the row from which the sweetness sprung,
Like dew-drops from a shaken rose-tree flung.
Wearied at last, I let the night-wind sweep
My demon harp, and lull me into sleep. 10

I slept as softly as the righteous dead,
Until a hand was laid upon my head—
Until a voice whose tones were deeply fraught
(As if they had been from the Godhead's caught
When worlds were made) with a divine control, 15
Thus broke upon the stillness of my soul—

“Mortal! awake, and end thy rugged lay!
Hast thou not something more than this to say?
Thy lyre is partial—struck with bloody hands,
By warrior bards in desolated lands, 20
The stirring tones rung from this golden harp
That mocked the music of the falchion sharp—
This ore of hell, purged in its wildest flame,
Found then a voice that told from whence it came.
With thee although its tones are passing weak, 25
Despite thy will, of good it will not speak;
Thou knowst its glittering chords would rather break,
And falsely thou hast chanted for its sake.
Though strong the instigation of its strings
To urge the utterance of forbidden things, 30

No whisper of thy harp told thee the truth
That ends the story of thy pagan youth :
Noble he was ; although the slave of pride,
The love-born virtues of his Christian bride
Wrought on his warring spirit as a spell 35
More potent far than those taught him of hell.
Wise as a guardian angel's was her care,
Her godly trust, her unremitted prayer ;
And sunk his shallow superstition fast
Until its dregs were shown to him at last. 40
The truth he learned, that book of books he read :
He started like a spirit from the dead
When dawned upon his soul the light sublime,
Which proved his hope a cheat, his faith a crime.
Remorse—despair—they came—alone he stood— 45
The sea before him seemed one lake of blood ;
Like springs blood bubbled from the rocky shore ;
The crowded clouds above were dropping gore :
There came a voice of long, deep, cureless woe—
' From thee I sprung,' it said ; ' with thee I go—' 50

It reached his heart—a prayer to God he gasped,
 As o'er his eyes his shuddering hands were clasped,
 And shook as Sinai's top his giant frame :
 ' Mercy, oh God !' he cried, and mercy came.

* * * * *
 * * * * *

“ Minstrel, the tale is told ; go—deck no more 55
 With barren glitter such unhallowed lore.
 What ! have not deeds been done deserving praise,
 That still this strain of war thy harp must raise ?”

Fair spirit, I replied, teach me the song
 Most loved and sung by thy seraphic throng. 60

“ Thou couldst not learn it, mortal ; thou shalt hear
 A song more suited to thy earthly ear,”
 He said, and pointed to a lucid cloud,
 Which from the starbright heaven slowly bowed ;
 It paused and opened midway ; and my sight 65
 Was dazzled by three holy forms of light

That stood like suns amid the folds of mist,
Whose colours glowed wheree'r their brightness
kissed.

Sudden and sweet their harps together rung ;
Sudden they ceased, and each in order sung. 70

HYMN.

I.

Three Seraphim.

“ Love God ! hear that divine decree !
Love God ! thy soul shall purer be—
Love God ! who should be loved as he ”

First Seraph.

“ Who keeps all peace, and stills all strife ;
Who made all worlds, who holds all life ; 75
Who measures out the length of time ;
Who cannot sink, who cannot climb ? ”

II.

Three Seraphim.

“ Love God ! hear that divine decree !
Love God ! thy soul shall purer be—
Love God ! who should be loved as he” 80

Second Seraph.

“ Who fixes fate for bliss or woe ;
Who nothing owes, whom all must owe ;
Who hath all strength, who all doth view ;
Who past and present ever knew ?”

III.

Three Seraphim.

“ Love God ! hear that divine decree ! 85
Love God ! thy soul shall purer be—
Love God ! who should be loved as he”

Third Seraph.

“Who can alone act surely right ;
Whose love is boundless as his might ;
Whose will is power, yet mercy too ; 90
Who died—yes, sinner—died for you ?”

Three Seraphim.

“Love God ! hear that divine decree !
Love God ! thy soul shall purer be—
Love God ! none should be loved as he.”

Ceased the deep strain, their shining pinions spread,
Fast as a martyr's prayer to heaven they sped : 96
Yet one stood nigh me, and I turned to him ;
The moon and stars above grew faint and dim
As light sprung round him, pure as that which broke
First into darkness when Jehovah spoke. 100

“ O son of man, what wouldst thou more than this—
For what is bliss to do, a home of bliss ?
Obey ! have peace on earth and joy above ;
O son of man, love God, for God is love ! ”

The words were said ; and swiftly to its home, 105
Unaided but by love, the brightness clomb :
The cherub stood amidst the heavenward light,
And both ascended through the dome of night.

END OF EPTIRMÁLI AND OF THE VIKING.

NOTES.



FORMÁLI.

(PROLOGUE)

Hióðs bið ec
Allar kindar,
Meiri oc minni,
Mavgo Heimðallar.
Vildo it ec Valfavövr
Vél fyr telia,
Fornspiöll fira
Þau er fremst um man.—*Völuspá, st. i.*

Give silence all,
Ye holy throng,
Both great and small
Of Heimdall sprung!

And Odin's state
 I will relate,
 With tales of old,
 I first was told.—*Song of the Sybil, st. i.*

NOTE 1, PAGE 3, LINE 1.

The banished Bragi saw his power decline.

Bragi, beccscravtvp̃r, the pride of the festal board, was famous for his wisdom, wit, and eloquence. He had no equal in song. Poesy was called after his name *Bragr*, and its votaries, male and female, were also thus designated. His wife Iduna, the Goddess of Youth, had charge of the casket that contained the golden apples of renovation.

NOTE 2, PAGE 3, LINE 5.

When from Hræsvelgur's wings a blast was flung.

Hræsvelgr heiter
 Er sitr á himins enda,
 Jötvnn í arnar ham ;
 Af hans vengiom
 Qvepa vind koma,
 Alla menn yfir.—*Vafthrúdnismál, st. xxxvii.*

Hræsvelgur is the giant's name,
 Who sits at heaven's end ;
 An eagle's plumage clothes his frame,
 And wide his wings extend ;
 Beneath them all the winds have birth,
 That sweep o'er this vast peopled earth.—
Song of Vafthrúdnir, st. xxvii.

NOTE 3, PAGE 4, LINE 8.

The harp which sunk deep into Noreg's snow.
 Noreg, Norway ; from norðr, north ; and vegr, way.

NOTE 4, PAGE, 4, LINE 9.

A sable Álf saw where the treasure dropped.

Álfr, pl. Álfar. According to the Edda, the Álfar, or Elves, are of two very distinct races. The Ljósálfar, or Elves of Light, are benevolent beings, whose home is in the highest heaven, whose forms are fairer than the sun itself ; but the Svartálfar, or Elves of Darkness, are malignant spirits of the blackest hue, who hide themselves during the day in the deep caverns of the earth. Prop. mas. Álfi.

NOTE 5, PAGE 4, LINE 15.

The Álf abhorred the Svíar from his heart.

The Svíar, or Swedes, are supposed to have been the last tribe that migrated from the East into Scandinavia. The aborigines who were not subjected to their arms, appear to have been driven into the mountains, caves, and forests; and there they doubtless led that wild, lonely, hostile life which in time gave rise to the legends of wizards, giants, and demons, that abound in the early history of the North.

NOTE 6, PAGE 4, LINE 18.

In spite he gave it to Zavarre the Jute.

The Jutes, or Jetter, were the primitive inhabitants of Scandinavia. See the note above.

NOTE 7, PAGE 4, LINE 21.

Where buried 'neath the wealth of Rán's rich grot.

Rán, the wife of Ægir, the God of the Sea, is represented as rejoicing in storms and shipwreck, because the souls and treasure that perished thus became her prey. In the writings of the Skalds and Sagamen, she generally appears as the same wild,

rapacious, implacable deity. Who could tell the wealth that was hidden in her palace beneath the wave? It contained all the plunder of the innumerable "fearful wrecks," and of

"Men that fishes gnaw upon—
Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl,
Inestimable stones, unvalued jewels,
All scattered in the bottom of the sea."—*Shakespeare*.

NOTE 8, PAGE 4, LINE 22.

Conceive ye this or not?

Vitið er enn, eða hvat?—*Völuspá, st. xxv.*

ARI OK DÛFA.

(THE EAGLE AND THE DOVE.)

Hátt bárum þá geira,
 Er tví-tugir töldumst,
 Ok týr ruðum víða.—*Lodbrokarkviða, st. iii.*

Far and wide my lance I bore,
 Oft I stained my glaive with gore,
 Ere my winters were a score.—*Song of Lodbrok, st. iii.*

NOTE 1, PAGE 8, LINE 14.

Sól sent aslant the earth her weakened beams.

Sól or Soel, (the impersonation of the sun,) was numbered with the Asynjor, or goddesses. She was said to be the daughter of Mundilfari, and Máni (Moon) was her brother.

NOTE 2, PAGE 13, LINE 114.

The sacred banner with her own white hands.

Sacred banners were anciently regarded as great promoters of victory. The chemise of the Virgin was used as a standard with miraculous effect by the Greeks and the French, and even the much dreaded *furor Normanorum* appears to have been overpowered by its hallowed influence.

NOTE 3, PAGE 13, LINE 120.

To arms ! to arms ! the Danes—the Danes are nigh !

Almost every British child knows enough of the early history of England to understand what follows here. It is probable that these “scommers and theeves of the sea” began to infest the southern coasts of Europe as early as the seventh century. Gregory of Tours mentions a Danish sea-rover who had strayed in search of plunder as far as the Maese in the beginning of the sixth. The reader may, however, consider my hero as contemporary with the celebrated Ragnar Lodbrok—as a hero of the *heroic* age, which, in spite of the painful labours of the historian, leaves the poet “ample verge and room enough.”

NOTE 4, PAGE 16, LINE 164.

His helmet I will fill with mancs of gold.

The Saxon manc, or mancus, of gold was worth about seven shillings sterling, and equal to fifty-six Troy grains in weight.

NOTE 5, PAGE 17, LINE 182.

Death called him as he saw the carnage heaped.

I have not been strictly consistent in the sex of certain impersonations, but have adopted that which seemed to accord with the bearing my strain had at the time on the heathen or on the Christian side. See note 15, p. 170.

NOTE 6, PAGE 17, LINE 192.

The magic raven of Öreyda drooped.

Öreyda signifies full of destruction. Ubba's celebrated banner Reafan was woven by the daughters of Ragnar in one noontide. The figure of a raven which was wrought upon it, appeared with outspreading pinions when victory promised for the Danes, and drooped when they were threatened with defeat.

Öreyda will also remind the reader of the famous Land-ravager of Harald Hárfagra.

NOTE 7, PAGE 17, LINE 199.

. His bold Bersærkir sink upon the ground.

The Bersærkir were those warriors who went to battle without defensive armour. (Berserkr from ber, bare; and serkr, a garment.) They were often possessed with a sort of madness which gave them superhuman strength and courage; but when the paroxysm had subsided, they became both weak and spiritless.

NOTE 8, PAGE 18, LINE 205.

The loftiest seat by Odin's awful throne.

Odin (Öðinn), say the Eddas, is the first and eldest of the gods. He rules over all; the heavens, the earth, the air, and all they contain, are the work of his hands. He is called Alfaðir (All-father) because he is the father of all the gods, and Valfaðir (Choosing-father), because he adopts all the warriors who fall in battle. When he is seated on his sacred throne called Hliðskjálf, he beholds all the world, and no action, good or evil, escapes his observation. Hlóðyn (Earth) is his wife, and Thor (Thunder) is their eldest and strongest son. The fourth day of the week was consecrated to Odin (old Norse,

Oðinsdagr; Anglo Sax., Wodnesdæg; Eng., Wednesday), and the last and greatest of the three principal religious festivals of the ancient Scandinavians was celebrated in his honour.

NOTE 9, PAGE 18, LINE 207.

Valhalla's shield-roofed towers half arise.

Valhalla, or the Hall of the Chosen, was the palace in which Odin received his warrior guests. Its roof was constructed of shields and spears, and its benches were strewn with helmets. The bard of Hlina thus alludes to it.

A baki lètu blikia

(Brapir voru grióti)

Svafnis salnæfrar

Seggir hyggiandi.—*From Gylfaginning, ch. 2.*

Imi.

The chief with care all worn,

Whom flinty showers had torn,

Beneath the golden tiles

Of wide Valhalla smiles.

NOTE 10, PAGE 18, LINE 208.

Its blushing maids in robes of glittering white.

The elect of Odin (Einherjar) were waited upon in Valhalla by the Choosers of the Slain. Terrible

as these maidens were in the conflict, they were, nevertheless, at the daily banquet of the heroes of the God of War, invested with all the softer attractions of Houris. Well might the royal Skald exclaim—

Sýtir ei dreingr við dauða
Dýrs at Fjölnis húsom.

Departed heroes never know
In Odin's hall a thought of woe.

NOTE 11, PAGE 18, LINES 212, 213.

*Its magic steeds, and its congenial sports ;
Its blissful revels, and its star-paved courts.*

The Chosen Heroes, say the Eddas, after they have risen, array themselves, mount their steeds, ride into the court of Odin, and fight till they are summoned to return to feast on Sæhrimnir, the best of meat, and drink the mead that owes its deliciousness to the famous tree Lærath.

Allir einheriar,
Opins tónom
Hauggvaz hverian dag.
Val þeir kíofa
Oc rípa vígi frá,
Aul með Ásom drecka,

Oc sepiaz Sæhrimni,
 Sitia meirr vm sáttir saman.—

Vafthrúdnismál, st. xli.

Every day in Odin's court,
 His heroes strive in warlike sport ;
 Some are destined to be slain,
 Yet all ride from the battle plain,
 To quaff with gods the sparkling mead,
 And on the sweet Sæhrimnir feed :
 The combatants sit o'er their cheer,
 Together like companions dear.—

Song of Vafthrúdnir, st. xli.

Andhrímnir lætr
 I Eldhrímnir
 Sæhrímnir sodinn.
 Flesca bezt,
 En þat fáir vito
 Hvat Einheria alaz.—*Grímnis-mál, st. xviii.*

Andhrímnir prepares
 In Eldhrímnir
 Sæhrímnir :
 It is the best of meat,
 But few of mortals weet,
 What the Einherjar eat.—

Song of Grímnir, st. xviii.

Such was the heaven of the Northman; a strange one indeed, but after his own heart.

NOTE 12, PAGE 18, LINE 217.

Stern Hilda flies above his floating plume.

Hilda, the Goddess of War, the Bellona of the North.

NOTE 13, PAGE 18, LINE 219.

And on her golden shield takes Gondol's storm.

Gondol's storm, missiles of war. Such metaphorical expressions abound in Skaldic poetry. I have used this peculiar language of fancy very sparingly in the Viking, but shall indulge in it more freely in my next Odinic song.

Gondol was one of the Valkyrjor. See the next note.

NOTE 14, PAGE 18, LINE 220.

The chieftain deemed the Valkyr waited nigh.

The Valkyrjor (sing. Valkyrja), or Choosers of the Slain, were the emissaries of Odin. They hovered over the field of battle, appointed the death of the heroes their god desired in his hall, and swayed the conflict as they had been commanded by Sigfaðir, the Father of Victory.

NOTE 15, PAGE 19, LINE 226.

What ! wouldst thou lure my soul to Hela's hall ?

Hela (Death) was the daughter of the Spirit and the Prophetess of Evil. She ruled over the nine infernal worlds and claimed the souls of all who died of sickness or old age. Indeed, all who fell not in battle seemed to have been assigned to her ; for, though the god Baldur was slain by violence, he was doomed to remain in her hall Elviðnir (Wide-storm) till the end of the world.

NOTE 16, PAGE 22, LINE 291.

The Northman prisoner sung in Skaldic strain.

The Skalds were the poets, or minstrels, of ancient Scandinavia. They were warriors as well as bards, and even kings are numbered among them. Their style is generally rude, figurative, and obscure ; the songs of the Edda and a few other remains of their composition, contain, nevertheless, much simple, wild, and sublime poetry.

I perceive that I have called the ancient Norwegians indifferently Normen, Northmen, and Norsemen. In writing of times subsequent to Rollo's settlement in France, a distinction should be ob-

served, but Normans (plural of Norman) appears to be a barbarism in our language.

NOTE 7, PAGE 22, LINE 292.

Of Thor who bore the deadly mace.

Thor (Thórr), the strongest of the gods, the Hercules of the North. He is supposed to have been the impersonation of thunder; his mace Mjöl-nir was certainly the symbol of lightning. He was much dreaded by the giants and evil genii, for his power had proved fatal to many of their kindred. The fifth day of the week (Thórsdagr) was consecrated to him; and he appears to have been regarded in Norway and Iceland with more reverence than even Odin himself.

NOTE 18, PAGE 22, LINE 293.

And warred upon the giant Utgard race.

Utgard (Utgarðr), the extremity creation beyond the ocean. It was a dark, desolate region consisting of mountains of ice and vast plains of snow. Its inhabitants were a race of swarthy giants called Jötuns, or Jötnar. They were skilful magicians, and the inveterate foes of the sons of Odin.

Utgard was also called Jötunheim, or Giant-home.

Ἐνθα δὲ Κιμμερίων ἄνδρῶν δῆμος τε, πόλις τε,
 Ἡέρι καὶ νεφέλῃ κεκαλυμμενοί, εἰδὲ ποτ' αὐτὸς
 Ἥελιος φαιθὼν ἐπιδέρεται ἀκτίνεσσιν,
 Ἄλλ' ἐπὶ νύξ ὅλοῃ τέταται δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσι.

Odyss. xi. line 14, &c.

NOTE 19, PAGE 22, LINE 294.

Of Baldur good, &c.

Baldur was the fairest, wisest, mildest, and best, of all the gods. He was unequalled in eloquence, his decrees were irreversible, and he was praised and beloved by all mankind. Few heathen theogonies boast of such a deity as Baldur. He was the son of Odin and Frea; his mansion was situated in the region called Breiðablik (Broad-brightness), and nothing unclean could approach it.

Breiða-blik heita

Þar er Baldr hefir

Sér of gerva sali :

Á þúi landi,

Er ec liggia veit

Fösta feicn-stafi.—*Grimnismál, st. xii.*

'Tis Breithablik where

Baldur the fair

S
Y
I
S
I

Hath built his stead ;
 That land 'tis said
 Hath seldom seen
 A thing unclean.

Song of Grímnir, st. xii.

HILDARLEIKR ; EÐA, HIÖRDRÁPA.

(HILDA'S SPORT ; OR, THE SONG OF THE SWORD.)

NOTE 20, PAGE 23, LINES 302, 303.

*Ere seventeen summers had passed o'er my head,
 The lives of a hundred my falchion had shed.*

Innumerable instances might be cited from the Sagas of the precocious valour of the Scandinavian youth. It was the prevailing practice to send young princes and noblemen on sea-roving expeditions, as soon as they could wield the sword and bend the bow. It is said of one of these juvenile adventurers—

Tólf vetra nam
 Tyggi at heria.

When twelve years old, the king
Began his plundering.

My notions of poetical propriety induced me to write "Ere seventeen summers," etc., but the ancient Norseman reckoned time by winters.

NOTE 21, PAGE 23, LINE 304.

Hjuggum vér með hjörvi.—Krákumál, st. i.

NOTE 22, PAGE 23, LINE 305.

And the ghosts of my slain around Hlórrida stalk.

Thor was called Hlórrida (Loud-rider) because he crushed the clouds with the wheels of his fiery chariot, and thus caused the rattling noise of thunder. His realm was named Thrúðváng (Field of Fortitude), and his palace, Bilskirnir (Stormy-sleep or Serenity).

Odin said of the latter—

Fimmhundrvþ gólfa
Ok vm fiórom togom,
Svð hygg ec Bilscirni með bvgom

Ranna þeirra
 Er ec rept vita,
 Míns veit ec mest magar.

Grímnis-mál, st. xxiv.

Five hundred halls
 And forty more
 Bilskirnir's walls
 Rise proudly o'er :
 Of houses roofed I know of none
 To match the mansion of my son.

Song of Glímnir, st. xxiv.

In this residence Thor received the slaves who expired in war, but the noblemen who died with arms in their hands were entertained by Odin himself.

Opin à jarla
 Þá er í val falla,
 Enn þórr á præla kyn.

Hárbarz-ljóð, st. xxi.

Odin hath right to all
 Jarls that in battle fall, "
 But Thor hath every thrall.

Song of Hárbard, st. xxi.

NOTE 23, PAGE 25, LINE 327.

As I felt the cold clasp of the goddess of death.

Not Hela, but one of the Valkyrjor, or virgins of slaughter.

NOTE 24, PAGE 25, LINE 328.

*I have fought with my sword ; but the wolf shall no more
Follow after my track, &c.*

We meet with a dismal succession of gory ravens, vultures, and wolves in the martial strains of the Skald. Nothing but the Northman's religious love of war could have rendered such barbarous imagery attractive. What ferocious spirit inspired the composer of such poetry as this ?

Raskligra er rekkom
Rjóða vâpn i blóði,
Víst tem ek gráðinn geysta
Gjarna ylgjar barni.—*Njála*, ch. 59.

'Tis best that mortals should
Redden their swords with blood ;
Fain would I the wolf cubs still,
And give the greedy young their fill.

Hví sè dreingr at feigri,
 At hann í odda èli
 Öndurör látinn verði ;
 Opt sýtir sá æfi,
 Er aldrei ni nístir ;
 Íllt kveða argan eggja
 Örum at sverða leiki ;
 Hugblauðum kemr hvergi
 Hjarta sitt at gagni.—*Krákumál, st. xxii.*

Imi.

Tell me what youth so fair appears
 As he who braves the storm of spears,
 And when his breast with wounds is red,
 Sinks gloriously among the dead ?
 They 'scape not woe who fear to wield
 Their swords upon war's stubborn field ;
 Yet who can move the dastard heart
 To act the fearless warrior's part ?

NOTE 25, PAGE 26, LINE 339.

And Night had touched the zenith with her wand."

Night was, according to the Prose Edda, the daughter of the giant Njörvi. See *Sólarspá*, p. 125.

NOTE 26, PAGE 26, LINE 351.

The Völur (sing. Vala) were the prophetesses of

Scandinavia. They were much respected in ancient times, and often consulted by the wisest and most powerful of the pagan chiefs.

The Vala alluded to here is the same that is mentioned in Gray's Descent of Odin.

Helheim, the home of Hela, was the abode of those who died ingloriously. It was a very cheerless place ; but its inmates might, nevertheless, console themselves with the hope of their redemption at the last day, when a tribunal different from that of the god of war should determine their eternal destiny.

NOTE 27, PAGE 29, LINE 396.

Which cripple worse than Elli.

Old Age. She it was who wrestled with Thor, the god of strength, and threw him on one knee.

NOTE 28, PAGE 29, LINE 400, &c.

*Munja it is in boundless Gardaland,
Jumalan mies, &c.*

Gardaland, Russia. Some of these names are rather strangely compounded, and others sufficiently truculent. Munja, Sla., Lightning ; Jumalan mies, Fin., Divine-man ; Vænnigg, Beautiful-terror ; Oth-rán, Furious-plunderer ; Örnavin, Friend-of-Eagles ; Elaár Dawn-of-Storms ; Vali, Strength.

NOTE 29, PAGE 29, LINE 411.

Along the path which radiant Máni showed.

Máni (Moon) was the brother of Sól (Sun) and the son of Mundilfari.

NOTE 30, PAGE 31, LINE 442.

Persuade me not—my home may Náströnd be.

Náströnd (Strand of the Dead), was to be the place of punishment of the wicked after the conflagration of the world. See *Sólarspá*, p. 134.

NOTE 31, PAGE 32, LINE 456.

Many of Midgard's maids I have beheld.

Midgard (Miðgarðr) was that part of the universe which was inhabited by mankind. It was also called Mannheim, or the Home of Man.

NOTE 32, PAGE 32, LINE 457.

Whose beauteous forms Ljósálfaheim's excelled.

Ljósálfaheim, the home of the Elves of Light. See note 4, p. 159.

NOTE 33, PAGE 32, LINE 459.

Daughter of Embla I could love till now.

Embla was the Eve of Scandinavian Mythology,

and Ask was the Adam. They were formed by the power of the Trinity, Odin, Vili, and Ve, out of two ash trees which were cast upon the sea-beech. Odin endowed both with a living soul, Vili added reason and motive power, and Ve gave them senses, speech, and beauty.

SJÖFNARILLSKA.

(THE MALICE OF THE GODDESS OF LOVE.)

Mær er mer tíðari,
Enn manni hveim
Ungom í árdaga.
Ása ok Álfa
Þat vill engi maðr
At víp samt sem.—*För Skirnis, st. vii.*

I love the maiden more
Than e'er loved youth before
In spring time of the heart ;
Yet I know that both
Gods and Elves are loth
That we should e'er consort.—
Journey of Skirnir, st. vii.

NOTE 1, PAGE 38, LINES 21 & 22.

*His sire from Odin sprung ; his mother's stock
Was of the giant king Utgardelok.*

Utgardelok (Utgarða-Loki) was the famous monarch who reigned over the Hrimþursar, or Frost-Giants. He was deeply skilled in magic, and defended himself so successfully against Thor by the illusions of his art, that the indignant god was compelled to quit his realm (Jötunheim) without being able to wreak the revenge he had meditated.

Utgardelok was the symbol of evil and obscurity, and his kingdom was buried in perpetual darkness.— See note 18, p. 171.

NOTE 2, PAGE 38, LINE 24.

His shapely form declared his Ása race.

Ása (Ásanna), divine ; Ása, or Æsir, Gods ; Ásynja, Ásynjor, Goddess, Goddesses. The holy Æsir were twelve in number ; Odin, Thor, Baldur, Njörd, Frey, Tyr, Bragi, Heimdall, Vidar, Vali, Ullur, and Forseti. They were all deemed worthy of adoration and sacrifice. Hödur and Loki also resided in the abode of the gods ; but the former was blind, and the latter malignant, and no man thought it worth his while to invoke them.

The fair complexions and graceful forms of the Æsir, contrasted very favourably with the sallow skins and huge figures of the inhabitants of Utgard.

NOTE 3, PAGE 38, LINES 25, 26.

*But magic dark which Odin could defy—
The Jötna spell spoke from his jet-black eye.*

Odin and the other Æsir were proficient in magic; but it was of a different nature from that of the Jötnar. The art of Odin was called a divine mystery, but the practices of the giants were stigmatised as fiendish and deadly. Yet Odin knew that his enemies were possessed of secrets unknown to himself, and often visited their land in disguise to satisfy his curiosity.

NOTE 4, PAGE 39, LINE 27.

His raven locks which clustered as they fell.

The ancient Danes and Northmen took great pains with their hair, and prided themselves much in its beauty. Sigurd, the son of Bui, when he was about to be executed, petitioned only that his hair might not be touched by a slave, or stained with his own blood. Such high regard for this natural ornament, was, however, not peculiar to the ancient Scandinavians, for the Spartans and other warlike nations,

appear to have held it in equal estimation. It was, indeed, in some countries, the peculiar privilege of noblemen to wear it long; and in others, the principal distinction of the king. “Les Rois des Francs, des Bourguignons, des Wisigoths, avoient pour diadème leur longue chevelure.”—*Montesquieu: Esprit des Loix, liv. xviii. chap. xxiii.* “Les Rois Francs et les Princes de leur race portoient une longue chevelure, et étoient par là distingués de leurs sujets;—ce qui sert à expliquer ce qui se pratiquoit lorsque l’on vouloit rendre un roi inhabile à la couronne: on le rasoit, et dès-lors il rentroit dans l’ordre des sujets.”—*Abrégé Chronol. de l’Hist. de France, tome i. pp. 46, 47, 5me edit.*

NOTE 5, PAGE 39, LINE 28.

Held waving charms no Runic could excel.

The Runic letters (Rún; plu. Rúnar, or Rúnir), were chiefly used by the Scandinavians for magical purposes. Sixteen was their original number, but other characters were subsequently added to make the Runic alphabet correspond with the Latin. Persons skilful in the art of their disposition, could effect almost anything; but the slightest error in their arrangement was sometimes fatal to the magician himself.

NOTE 6, PAGE 39, LINE 29.

Yet the weird letters on his Galldra vest.

Galldr, or Galldrakunst, was the mystery of runes and the art of incantation. The Galldra-Kona wove invulnerable tunics, and presented her favourite with talismanic charms which rendered him invincible.

NOTE 7, PAGE 39, LINE 33.

Beneath his angry glance the peasant shook.

The superstition here alluded to has obtained with almost every nation in the world. Finn Magnusen supposes that it originated in the ancient belief that immortal spirits in disguise could not veil the unearthly brilliance of their eyes. It is, however, so natural that we should rather attribute it to the power of the eye to express the "unutterable things" of love and hate. I have seen the glance of an angry man almost *strike* his enemy; and what sceptic will not admit that a "wondrous" strength is revealed in

"The light
Of a dark eye in woman?"—BYRON.

NOTE 8, PAGE 40, LINES 49, 50.

*Blood from his sword on Finnmörk's snows had sunk,
And deep great Bláland's thirsty sands had drunk.*

Finnmörk, the country of the Finns and Lapps.
Great Bláland (Blue-land), Æthiopia Magna.

NOTE 9, PAGE 40, LINE 60.

On those who joined with him in Hilda's toil.

Hilda's toil, or Hilda's sport, (Hildar-leikr);
battle, warfare.

Hildar-leikr! þar er kvassir
Hjálmostofn bitu skjómar.—*Krákumál, st. xiv.*

Hilda's sport! where falchions' bite
The surface of the helmet bright.

NOTE 10, PAGE 40, LINES 63, 64.

*And well it was that the Valkyrjor oft
Were sitting on their winged steeds aloft.*

Vísir þat heyrdi
Hvat valkyrjor mæltu
Mærar af mars baki:
Hyggiliga leto,
Ok hjálmapar sátu
Ok höfpoz hlífir fyrir.—*Hákonar-mál.*

Imi.

From maids of war with helm and shield,
Who sat on steeds above the field,
And with their anxious thoughts conferred,
His doom the dauntless monarch heard.—

Song of Hákon.

See note 14, p. 169.

NOTE 11, PAGE 41, LINE 68.

And longed to clasp him in Valhalla's court.

Or field of Odin, in which his warriors held their
daily tournament. See note 11, p. 167.

NOTE 12, PAGE 41, LINE 69.

Loved by the Æsir and the sons of Hrym.

See note 2, p. 182, Hrym, or Hrymur, king of the
Frost-giants.

NOTE 13, PAGE 42, LINE 87.

Although his feet as yet on Mannheim trod.

Mannheim (Man-home), the earth. See note 31,
p. 179.

NOTE 14, PAGE 42, LINE 88.

Bright Asgard was his home, himself—a god.

Asgard (Asgarðr), the abode of the gods. It contained twelve stately palaces, which are regarded by Prof. Finn Magnusen, as descriptive of the annual track of the sun. His arrangement is as follows—

<i>Solar Mansions.</i>	<i>Correspondent Signs.</i>	<i>Sun Enters.</i>	<i>Presiding Deities.</i>
1 Ydalir	♄	Nov. 23.	Ullr.
2 Alfheimr	♅	Dec. 23.	Freyr.
3 Valaskjálf	♆	Jan. 22.	Vali.
4 Sökkvabekkr	♇	Feb. 21.	Saga.
5 Glaðsheimr	♈	Mar. 23.	Oðinn.
6 Thrymheimr	♉	Apr. 22.	Skaði.
7 Breiðablik	♊	May 22.	Balldr.
8 Himinbjörg	♋	June 21.	Heimðal
9 Fólkvangr	♌	July 25.	Freyja.
10 Glitnir	♍	Aug. 24.	Forseti.
11 Nóatún	♎	Sept. 23.	Njörðr.
12 Landviði	♏	Oct. 23.	Viðar.

Asgard was built by the sons of Bør—Odin, V and Ve.

This line may be misunderstood; and I may

told that it is impossible for any human being but a madman, to deem himself a god. It is not so. Our bodies, we know, are mortal, but our souls are immortal. We are called gods in Scripture; and, if we are the adopted sons of the Most High, we are gods indeed; superior to Odinic deities, who, according to the Eddas, were only gods of time.

“ Could you but fear an end,
The ghastly thought would drink up all your joy.”—

YOUNG.

NOTE 15, PAGE 42, LINES 89, 90.

Old Mundilfari's child was tired indeed ;

“ Arvak,” she cried, “ and Alsviðr, slack your speed !”

Mundilfari had a son and a daughter so lovely that he called the former Máni (Moon) and the latter Sól (Sun). To punish him for this presumption, the gods deprived him of his children, and compelled Sól to drive the horses of the sun (Arvakr, Watcher of Dawn; and Alsviðr, Allscorching), and set Máni to guide the moon in his career.

NOTE 16, PAGE 42, LINE 92.

And I will rest awhile in Glenur's cave.

Sól, or Soel, was betrothed to Glenur before she was translated to the heavens.

NOTE 17, PAGE 42, LINES 97, 98.

*I yet must hie to Muspell ; for our globe
Shone not so bright to-day as Surtur's robe.*

Muspell, or Muspellheim ; the home of light and heat. It was situated far to the south ; and its glowing air and burning soil were fatal to all but its native inhabitants. It was the great agent of creation, and Surtur, its king, was to issue forth at the last day, with his empyreal host, and consume the heavens and the earth with fire.

NOTE 18, PAGE 43, LINE 106.

Ægir and Rán beheld them with dismay.

Ægir, the God of the Sea, was an hospitable, wise, and beneficent deity, but Rán, his spouse, was the terror of seamen. See note 7, p. 160.

NOTE 19, PAGE 43, LINE 107.

Dread Maelström's rage and Kraken's thunder snort.

The reader has doubtless read of the Maelström, a vast whirlpool off the coast of Norway ; but with

the Kraken, perhaps, he is not so familiar. If he consult the credulous Bishop Pontoppidan's Natural Hist. of Norway, he will find that it is a monster of the deep, whose back (its whole body has never been beheld by man) is at least a mile and a half in circumference!

NOTE 20, PAGE, 43, LINE 110.

And to their coral caverns mermaids slunk.

There are many beautiful old Danish ballads extant, which contain interesting accounts of the mermen and mermaids. The peasantry of the North still have faith in the witchery of their songs, and their claim to the bodies of the drowned.

NOTE 21, PAGE 45, LINE 155.

Far faster than grey Sleipnir Odin bore.

Sleipnir, Odin's famous horse, was the offspring of Loki and Svadilfari. He had eight legs, and was the best of steeds. He once cleared the gates of Hel at one bound with Hermoður, the messenger of Odin, on his back. See the next note.

NOTE 22, PAGE 45, LINE 156.

Away from Mánagarm's deep mouth of gore.

Mætti han hvælp
 þeim ær or hæliv kom.
 Seá var blóðvgr
 Um brióst framan,
 Kiapt vígfrekan,
 Ok kíálka neðan :
 Gó han á móti
 Ok gein stðrvm
 Galldr föðr ;
 Gól vm længi.
 Framm ræið Oðinn, &c.

Vegtams-kviða, st. vi. &c.

Then met the father of the spell
 An angry hound that came from Hel,
 Whose breast with blood was clotted o'er,
 Whose eager jaws dropped fresher gore ;
 With dismal yell he stretched his jowl ;
 After the king long rung his howl.
 On rode Odin, &c.

Song of Vegtam (Wanderer), st. vi. &c.

See Gray's inimitable paraphrase entitled "The Descent of Odin."

NOTE 23, PAGE 47, LINE 191.

Or waste the dreamy day in Álfa-shades.

The Álfa-shades (Elvir-shades) were haunted by those fairy maidens so celebrated in old ballads. They obtained an evil character after the introduction of Christianity; and it was said to be dangerous to visit them, and certain destruction to yield to their allurements.

NOTE 24, PAGE 47, LINE 194.

How ill the Huldrafolk compare with thee.

The Huldrafolk, or people of Hulda, were the fairies. Hulda was the enchantress who presented to Odin his wondrous ravens Huginn and Muninn. She is still regarded by the Norwegian rustics as the queen of the fairies; and a plaintive music rising, they say, from subterranean halls, is called the "strain of Hulda."

NOTE 25, PAGE 48, LINE 201.

Where the wrathful spirit in his snowy shroud.

This is an allusion to a phenomenon much dreaded by the Swedish miners.

NOTE 26, PAGE 48, LINE 204.

And loved the chilly height of Dovrefeld.

Sneehætte, the highest peak of Dovre Fjeld. Its surface consists of rounded masses of gneis and granite, and its summit is about 7300 feet above the level of the sea.

NOTE 27, PAGE 48, LINE 208.

Broad as the sea, from Surtur's realms below.

Surtur sent the heat which first gave life and animation to the frozen abyss ; and the God of Fire was ever seated at the extremity of his realm to keep his element in subjection. It, nevertheless, escaped his control at times, and marred the creation it had brought forth ; as the following description of a region subject to its visitation, will sufficiently show :

“The vicinity of the sulphur mines of Fremri also consists of lava, and from the mountains around which these mines lie, as far as the eye can reach, nothing is seen but one interminable region of desolation. The dismal gloom of this tract is barely relieved by the columns of smoke that are constantly ascending into the atmosphere through aper-

tures and fissures in various parts of the surface. Here the *oddda hraum*, or horrible lava, begins and extends to a great distance towards the south and the west. It is described as the wildest and most hideous tract in the whole island. The surface is extremely rugged, consisting of broken and pointed rocks, between which are fissures and chasms of a tremendous size, that throw insuperable barriers in the way of any traveller who might wish to penetrate beyond them."—*Henderson's Iceland*.

NOTE 28, PAGE 49, LINE 223.

Which thou shalt grace through Lofna's granted power.

Lofna was endowed by the Father of All with the power of removing all obstacles to the union of true lovers.

NOTE 29, PAGE 49, LINES 227, 228.

*Save one Ljósálfar keep in our behoof,
Beneath eternal Gimli's golden roof.*

Gimli, according to Odinic mythology, is to be the blissful abode of the righteous after the destruction of the temporal earth, heavens, and deities.

Sal sér hon standa
 Sólo fegra
 Gvilli þacðan
 Á Gimle.
 Þar scola dyggvar
 Drottír byggia
 Oc vm aldrdaga
 Yndis nióta.—*Völuspá, st. lvii.*

She sees a hall
 Brighter than Sól,
 With gold roof spanned,
 In Gimli stand :
 There men of worth
 In joyous mirth,
 Shall pass the day
 In bliss for aye.

Song of the Sibyl, st. lvii.

Gimli was the habitation of the Elves of Light ;
 it was situated in the third heaven called Víðbláinn.

NOTE 30, PAGE 49, LINE 230.

And joy with them whom Ragnarök shall spare.

Ragnarök (Twilight of the Gods), the destruction of the world. It will, we are told, be preceded by a long season of cold, storm, and violence, in which

many will perish, and be consummated by the conflagration of the universe.

NOTE 31, PAGE 51, LINE 258.

I had learned all our lettered rocks convey.

Runic inscriptions on rocks and tomb-stones, are still to be found in the North.

NOTE 32, PAGE 51, LINE 259.

All that our Skalds and Sagamen recite.

See note 16, p. 170. Sagamen, or Story-tellers, were in great estimation with the ancient Northmen. We are chiefly indebted to their written narratives for the knowledge we possess of the manners, customs, and history of our Scandinavian forefathers.

The Icelandic Sagas are very numerous ; some merely recount personal adventures and family feuds, but others relate to matters of the highest importance.

NOTE 33, PAGE 51, LINES 265, 266.

*For in your convents, knowledge, beauty, gold,
Are stored away convenient for the bold.*

The heathens of the North often gratified their fanaticism and lust of booty by pillaging the churches and monasteries of the Christians.

NOTE 34, PAGE 52, LINE 278.

So thought thy sires of Baldur's beauteous race.

Most of the Saxon chieftains trace their descent to Odin, or Woden. As Baldur, his son, was supposed to have been king of the Angles, I have made him the common ancestor of the English race. This origin ought to satisfy the most patriotic; for neither the lovely Helena nor the pious Æneas, are to be compared with Baldur.—See note 19, p. 172.

NOTE 35, PAGE 52, LINE 282.

That even thou wouldst Hervor's spirit show.

Hervor, a celebrated Amazon, is the heroine of one of the most interesting and poetical of the Sagas.

NOTE 36, PAGE 52, LINE 285.

As Hetha in Bravalla's carnage stood.

Hetha, another Camilla of the North. She fought at the head of a hundred Amazons in the famous battle between Harald Hildetand and Sigurdr Ring.

NOTE 37, PAGE 53, LINES 289, 290.

*Might I but see thee, fair as Valkyr sent,
To soar with souls whose earthly hours are spent.*

Heim bjóða mér Dísir,
Sem fra Herjans höllu
Hefir Óðin mér sendar.—*Krákumál, st. xxix.*

Hark ! celestial virgins call
My spirit to its home ;
Odin sent them from his hall—
They bear me to his dome.—
Song of Kráka, st. xxix.

NOTE 38, PAGE 53, LINE 293.

Though mounted on a Valkyr's gold-hoofed steed.

The hoofs of the horses on which these maidens rode, and which bore the spirits of heroes to Valhalla, were of pure gold.

NOTE 39, PAGE 53, LINE 300.

A virgin of slaughter in armour sheen.

An Amazon. The Skalds, like the bards of Greece and Rome, perceived much poetry in the idea of martial beauty, and did not fail to adorn their alliterative strains with such conceptions.

If the reader be addicted to scanning, he may find employment in this line. The verse is, I think acatalectic; and, if so, such rhythm should more frequently be introduced to vary the English heroic.

NOTE 40, PAGE 53, LINE 302.

While our conflicting blades sang terror's song.

Seo byrne sang gryre leoða sum.

Er sýngu

Við háyseymda hjálma

Hörð jalm, &c.

NOTE 41, PAGE 53, LINE 306.

And looked upon my nothing work with shame.

Níðings - verk, or níðingskapr; base, infamous action.

NOTE 42, PAGE 54, LINE 312.

And would have been to any son of Ask.

Ask (Askr) was the Adam of Odinic mythology.
See note 33, p. 179.

Unz þrír qvomo

Or því liði

Avflgir oc ástgir

Æsir at husi.

Evndo á landi

Litt megandi

Asc oc Emblo
 Orlöglausa.
 Avnd þau né áttu
 Óð þau né hafðu
 Lá né læti
 Né lito góða.
 Avnd gaf Óðinn
 Óð gaf Hœnir
 Lá gaf Lóðvrr
 Oc lito góða.—*Völuspá, xv., xvi.*

Then from council high,
 The holy three drew nigh
 (Gods of love and might)
 Unto their homestead bright :
 In their path they found,
 Helpless on the ground,
 Ask and Embla too,
 Who nought of fate yet knew :
 Lifeless there they lay ;
 Reason lent nó ray ;
 No blood, no vigour set
 Health in their cheeks as yet.
 Odin gave life at length,
 Hœnir gave mental strength,
 And Lóthur purple blood
 And lovely hue bestowed.

Song of the Sibyl, xv. xvi.

The names of the persons of this Pagan Trinity are also Odin, Vili, and Ve ; Hár, Jafnhár, and Thriði ; Njörðr, Freyr, and Almighty God.

NOTE 43, PAGE 54, LINES 313, 314.

*The dark-eyed Finna's spell-encompassed form,
That e'en in death retains illusive charm.*

The Finna (fem. of Finn) was profound in magic. We are told of one, the mistress of a celebrated king, whose charms continued to fascinate her royal lover even after her death ; but when the corpse was removed from its enchanted bier, the spell was broken.

NOTE 44, PAGE 54, LINE 315.

The night-born queen who wooes the sons of day.

An old Saga tells of royal sisters, dwelling in a region of darkness, whose kiss was as potent as the cup of Circe.

NOTE 45, PAGE 54, LINE 317.

The blue-eyed Nordfrú with her breast of snow.

Norðfrú, North-lady.

NOTE 46, PAGE 54, LINE 318.

The southern maid whose limbs like Gerda's glow.

Gerda (Gerður) was the daughter of Gymir and the impersonation of the Aurora Borealis.

NOTE 47, PAGE 55, LINE 325.

Which mild Valkyrjor bore to Freyja's car.

Freyja (pronounced Freya) was the Scandinavian Venus. She had the first choice of the slain whenever she rode to the field of battle.

Hálfan val hon kýss,

Hverian dag,

Enn hálfan Óðinn á.—*Grímnis-mál, st. xiv.*

She every day asserts her claim

Unto one half of all the slain,

And half to Odin then remain.

Song of Grímnir, st. xiv.

NOTE 48, PAGE 55, LINE 228.

And with her prize to Fólkváng proudly rose.

Fólkvángur heitir

Enn þar Freyja ræðr

Sessa kostum í sal.—*Grímnis-mál, st. xiv.*

Fólkváng is the heaven wide

Where right hath Freyja to decide

Who shall sit in its seats of pride.

Song of Grímnir, st. xiv.

NOTE 49, PAGE 55, LINE 337.

The bridegroom at the festal board she slew.

The bridal ceremony of the ancient Scandinavians was more legal than religious. It was generally consummated by a banquet, at which the happy pair emptied the marriage cup together; and the rejoicings were not unfrequently terminated in the manner described in the text.

NOTE 50, PAGE 56, LINE 348.

That busy Sjöfna's melting arts inspire.

Sjöfna (Sjöfn), like the classic god Cupido, made the hearts of mortals her peculiar care.

NOTE 51, PAGE 56, LINES 357, 358.

*On Valland's coast, where Normen are enticed
With snow-white garments to acknowledge Christ.*

Valland, France. The northern heathens called our Saviour the White Christ, because converts to Christianity were invested at their baptism with white robes. An apostate pagan boasted that he had worn no less than sixteen of them.

NOTE 52, PAGE 56, LINE 364.

Or will Verthandi's smile for aye endure.

Verthandi, the Norn, or Destiny, of the Present.

NOTE 53, PAGE 57, LINE 367.

No, no ; her sister weaves a thread of woe.

Her sister ; Skuld, the Destiny of the Future.

NOTE 54, PAGE 57, LINES 371, 372.

*With dragon beaks, and sides with bucklers gilt,
Ne'er nobler ocean-homes Ivallda built.*

The decoration of his hero's war-ship was a great theme with the Skald. Some of the royal vessels were the wonders of the age.

Dwarf Ivallda, or Ivaldi, was a famous artisan. His sons constructed Skiðblaðnir, the best of ships. She was large enough to hold all the gods in their war array ; a fair breeze filled her sails as soon as they were set ; and when she had reached her destination, Frey folded her together like a handkerchief and disposed of her as easily.

NOTE 55, PAGE 58, LINE 388.

As Gerda wooed by Álfheim's generous boy.

Álfheimr (Elf-home) was the residence assigned to Frey.

Álfheim Frey gáfo
 I árdaga
 Tívar at tann-fe.—*Grímnis-mál, st. v.*
 At creation's day
 The gods to infant Frey
 Álfheim gave to sway.

Frey was the God of light, and his Elves represented its rays.

Þu íat álfraupvll
 Lýser vm alla daga.

He was much worshipped in Sweden, and the annual feast of Jul was celebrated in his honour. Yet, albeit he backed his power, his divinity with invaluable presents, Gerda, a Jötun maiden, would not consent to be his bride till she was threatened with the loss of her beauty. Frey (Freyr) was the son of Njörd and the brother of Freyja.

NOTE 56, PAGE 61, LINE 448.

His cure was only for the skill of Eir.

Eir, the Goddess of Medicine.

NOTE 57, PAGE 61, LINE 450.

Thou didst admire that vest a Dyrgía wove.

Dyrgía, a female dwarf. In reference to the lines that follow, it may be observed that the Saxon no-

blemen were very fond of wearing costly tunics, woven with golden flowers, &c., and their ladies justly celebrated for their skill in such kind of work.

NOTE 58, PAGE 61, LINES 461, 462.

*As sad a maiden whom stern Syn upbraids
From Vingólf's golden gates to Helu's shades.*

Syn, the Goddess of Denial, was the portress of Vingólf, the home of the goddesses and the Valhalla of women. Syn was said to be, like St. Peter, very rigid in her duty.

NOTE 59, PAGE 66, LINES 556, 557.

*Shall bear him gently to the herb-skilled wives
Of Vængis-hjört, &c.*

Before the introduction of Christianity and cleric physicians in the North, it was the office of women to heal the wounded and cure the sick. Vængis-hjört (Venger's hart), the name given to the vessel of a sea-king.

NOTE 60, PAGE 68, LINE 577.

Whose vital radiance spoke the unhallowed spell.

Þat kann ek íp tívnda
 Ef ek sép tun-ripor
 Leika lopti á.
 Ek sva vinnk
 At þeir villir fara
 Sinna heim-hama
 Sinna heim-hvga.
 Þat kann ek íp sextánda
 Ef ek vill ins svinna mans
 Hafa géð alt ok gaman.
 Hvgi ek hverfi
 Hvít-armri kono
 Ok sný ek hennar avllom sefa.

Háva-mál, clviii. clxiv.

NOTE 61, PAGE 68, LINE 582.

Faster than honey-dew from Yggdrasill.

Yggdrasill, the tree of the universe, from whose leaves (the stars of heaven) descend the dews upon the earth.

NOTE 62, PAGE 68, LINES 587, 588.

*It is the tone in which false Odin spoke,
When he the heart of gentle Gunnlauth broke.*

Gunnlauth, the daughter of Suttungr, had custody of the mead of poetical inspiration: Odin to secure the treasure, seduced the maiden, and left her exposed to the wrath of her Jötun sire.

NOTE 63, PAGE 68, LINE 591.

Of Vilmeith's darkly folded demon lore.

Eru vitkar allir frá Vilmeipi. All wizards are descended from Vilmeithr.

ÁNGURBODI.

(THE PROPHETESS OF EVIL.)

Seið hon kvnni
Seið hon leikin ;
Æ var hon ángan
Illrar pióðar.—*Völuspá, st. xx.*

Right deeply skilled
Our woes to build ;
To work annoy
Was all her joy.

Song of the Sibyl, st. xx.

NOTE 1, PAGE 73, LINE 5.

Daughters of Dvalinn ! what hath roused your wrath ?

They were the Nornir, or Destinies, of ignoble stock, and the great promoters of misfortune.

Sundr-bornar miðc
 Hygg ec at Nornir sæ,
 Eigot þær ætt saman ;
 Sumar eru Askunnar
 Sumar eru Álfkunnar
 Sumar dætr Dvalins.

From different regions Nornir came,
 Their natal place is not the same,
 Unequal, too, their origin ;
 Some to the Æsir are akin,
 Some from the race of Alfar come,
 And daughters of dwarf Dvalinn some.

NOTE 2, PAGE 74, LINE 9.

But I have blabbed like Alvíss.

Alvíss (All-wise) was the dwarf who obtained by his subtlety, a promise from the daughter of Thor that she would marry him. He went secretly one night to her bower to persuade her to fulfil her engagement, but was surprised by the God of Strength before he had prevailed upon her to consent. The dwarf, however, kept his ground, and pleaded the inviolability of the solemn promise the maiden had given him. Thor replied that, as he had not been

consulted, the betrothal was not binding; but added, if the lover could prove himself worthy of the name he bore, he should nevertheless have his daughter. Alviſs accepted the offer gladly, and was so led away by his vanity in replying to the questions of Thor, that he allowed the rays of the Elves (the light of morning) to fall upon him and transform him into a stone.

The dwarfs lived beneath the rocks, and the light of day was the bane of their race.

NOTE 3, PAGE 74, LINE 23.

His ruddy death to Gladsheim speeds his ghost.

Glaðsheimr (Home of Gladness), the vestibule of Valhalla.

NOTE 4, PAGE 74, LINE 25.

All tread the path of Fate, &c.

The Odinists, like the Mahometans, were great fatalists.

Hitt sýniz mér raunar

At forlögom fylgjom,

Fárr gengr af sköp Norna.

Loðbrókarkviða, st. xxiv.

Certain it seems to me
Slaves of Fate are we,
Acting as Norns decree.

Song of Lothbrók, st. xxiv.

NOTE 5, PAGE 74, LINES 26, 27, 28.

*The Nornir shall not mark my soul decline,
Though young Verthandi hath no smiling brow,
And Skulda—once so bright—is frowning now.*

The Nornir, or Parcæ, were very numerous, but the chief were the three divine virgins Urðr, Verðandi, and Skuld; Past, Present, and Future. These wove the destinies of gods and men; and all good fortune was to be attributed to them.

NOTE 6, PAGE 75, LINE 32.

Many too fondly weep by Urda's fount.

The fountain of the Past, under the tree of Time, near the hall of Fate.

NOTE 7, PAGE 75, LINE 36.

Age for the apples of Iduna sighs.

Iduna (Iðunn), the wife of Bragi, the God of

Poetry and Song, was the Goddess of Youth. She had charge of the golden fruit of renovation, which the gods tasted whenever they felt the hand of Elli (Old Age) upon them. Once on a time, Iduna and her treasure were stolen by the giant Thiassi—the might of the Æsir failed, and the beauty of the Asynjor withered, and all the inhabitants of heaven were in consternation till the daughter of Ivallda and her apples were recovered from Jötunheim.

This myth is an allegory of the effects of winter and the return of spring.

NOTE 8, PAGE 75, LINE 40.

But mount to Odin from the field of death.

Although death on the field of battle was deemed the most certain and glorious passport to Valhalla, sick and aged persons, thinking a violent end would entitle them to a seat in the hall of Odin, cast themselves from cliffs into the sea, or wounded their breasts with swords as they expired.

NOTE 9, PAGE 76, LINES 63, 64.

*If the deep sunk oak engirt a narrow cave,
Some ancient heathen warrior's fiery grave.*

Oaks were sometimes planted over the graves of

famous Norse warriors, and the treasures buried with them were supposed to be protected by fiery emanations.

NOTE 10, PAGE 77, LINE 73.

Its walls of gold were hung with jewelled shields.

The palaces of Asgarth were constructed of precious metals, and the Valhallas were ornamented with the rich armour and weapons of the translated warriors. Freyja's hall was of course more voluptuous than that of Odin, which is thus described in the Elder Edda :

Glaðs-heimr heitir enn fimti,
 þars hin gvllbiarta
 Valhaull víð of þrvmir.
 Enn þar Hroptr kyss
 Hverian dag
 Vapndavpa vera.
 Miðc er avþkent
 þeim er til Oðins koma
 Sal-kynni at síá :
 Skavptom er rann rept,
 Scioldom er salr þakipr,
 Bryniom vm becki strád.

Grimnis-mál, viii. ix.

This fifth is Gladsheim hight,
 There with gold bedight,
 Stands Valhalla bright.
 Daily Odin calls
 The band to its wide walls
 That in the conflict falls.
 With ease when strangers come
 To visit Odin's home,
 They know its warlike dome ;
 The roof of spears is built,
 The hall with shields is gilt,
 And armour o'er its benches spilt.

Song of Grímnir, viii. ix.

NOTE 11, PAGE 78, LINE 85.

Ten thousand thousand Alfar light-imbued.

Ljósálfar eru fegri enn sól sýnum, from living in the region of light.—See note 4, p. 159.

NOTE 12, PAGE 78, LINE 96.

And virgins of the shield devoid of fear.

Skjöldmeyjar (Shield-maids), Amazons. See note 39, p. 199.

NOTE 13, PAGE 79, LINES 113, 114, 115.

*And bore him in our arms to Vingólf's towers,
And long he slept mid Fólkváng's heavy flowers ;
Now in Sessrúmnir, &c.*

Vingólf (Friend-floor, or Abode of Amity) was the heaven of the Asynjor. See note 58, p. 207. Fólkváng was the paradise of Freyja, and Sessrúmnir was her mansion. See note 48, p. 203.

NOTE 14, PAGE 79, LINE 119.

To visit Vanadís.

Freyja was sometimes called Vanadís (Goddess of the Vanir), because she was of the lineage of the Spirits of Air.

NOTE 15, PAGE 79, LINE 122.

Which round the dais like rich incense flowed.

Dais ; prop. öndvegi, or high seat. The öndvegi stood on the southern side of the hall, and was always occupied by the master of the feast.

Glaðr skal ek öl með Ásum
I öndvegi drekka.—*Krákumál, st. xxix.*

In bliss the gods I soon shall meet,
And pledge them in their *highest seat*.

Song of Kráka, st. xxix.

NOTE 16, PAGE 79, LINE 224.

Kneeling before the proud Ásynja's throne.

Ásynja, Ásynjor; Goddess, Goddesses. They were Frigga, Saga, Eir, Gefjon, Fulla, Freyja, Sjöfn, Lofn, Vör, Syn, Hlin, Snotra, Gná, Sól, Bil, Jörð, Rindur, and the Valkyrjor.

Frigga and Freyja were the most celebrated and powerful of the goddesses.

NOTE 17, PAGE 80, LINE 125.

He saw that child of Njörd whose beauties boast.

Njörd (Njörðr) was the God of the Winds. He came originally from Vanaheim, where, according to the custom of his race, he had espoused his sister. Their children were Frey and Freyja. He was afterwards married to Skadi, the Goddess of Hunting. Having rule over the winds, Njörd had also control over the ocean; he was very powerful, and so wealthy that he could bestow land and treasure on all his votaries.

NOTE 18, PAGE, 80, LINE 138.

When in the presence of the Queen of Love.

Freyja was the Goddess of Love and Beauty. Sjöfna was her emissary, or female Cupid; Lofna her attendant, or female Hymen; her necklace Brísíngr matched the Cestus of Cytherea; and her name Mardöll indicates her connexion with the sea.

Orta salo, suscepta solo, patre edita Cælo.—

Ausonius.

NOTE 19, PAGE 80, LINE 142.

It is a branch of holy Yggdrasill.

Yggdrasill was the largest and best of trees. It is supposed to have been the symbol of organized creation. The holiest seat of the gods was beneath the ash, and there they held their daily council. Yggdrasill had three principal roots; one in heaven, another in Utgard, and a third in Hel, over the abyss of Niflheim.

NOTE 20, PAGE 81, LINE 146.

The fiery current of the Furious One.

The Furious One, Odin.

NOTE 21, PAGE 81, LINE 152.

Our mutual foes

Who now are moving from their northern snows.

The Frost-giants ; they were the children of Darkness and the natural antagonists of the Æsir, the sons of Light. See note 5, p. 160 ; note 18, p. 171, and note 1, p. 182.

NOTE 22, PAGE 81, LINE 153.

And 'gainst the vengeful race of Hela dire.

The infernal powers who issue at the last day from the halls of Hela.

Fara fífls megir
Með Freka allir,
Þeim er bróðir
Býleips í fœr.—*Völuspá, st. xlv.*

The powers fell,
The wolf of hell,
Led by no other
Than Byleist's brother.—

Song of the Sibyl, st. xlv.

NOTE 23, PAGE 81, LINE 154.

And radiant Surtur with his sons of fire.'

See note 17, p. 190.

NOTE 24, PAGE 81, LINE 155.

They come ! the Ása chiefs on Vígríth's plain.

Vígríð, the final battle field, the Armageddon of the Odinic deities.

Vígríðr heitir völlr,
Er finnaz vígi at
Surtur oc en svasu goð :
Hundrat rasta
Hann er á hverian veg ;
Sá er þeim völlr vitaðr.—

Vafprúðnismál, st. xviii.

The field is Vígríth hight,
Where gentle gods in fight
Shall strive with Surtur bright ;
That plain spreads far and wide
(A hundred miles each side),
To which the fated gods must ride.—

Song of Vafthrúdnir, st. xviii.

NOTE 25, PAGE 81, LINE 156.

By Loki's frightful brood and Fate are slain.

Loki or Loptur, the Spirit of Evil, the son of the giant Farbauti and Nál. He was called the calumniator of the Æsir, and the shame of gods and men.

He was very handsome, witty, and pleasant, but surpassed all beings in cunning and wickedness. He was tolerated in Valhalla until his crimes grew so flagrant, that the gods were compelled to punish him. They bound him with iron bands to three massive rocks, and Skadi contrived a torture which was, we are told, to keep him in cruel suspense till the twilight of the gods.

Loki was the leman of Ángurboði, the Prophetess of Evil; she had three children by him—Fenrir, Jörmungand, and Hela.

NOTE 26, PAGE 81, LINE 160.

And follow him at Heimdall's trumpet-call.

See note 30, p. 225. Heimdall (Heimdallr), the White God, was the Watchman of Heaven; he dwelt in Himinbjörg;

Himinbiörg heita

En þar Heimdall

Queða valda veum:

Þar vörðr goða drekr,

I væru ranni,

Glaðr hinn góða miðð.—

Grímnis-mal, st. xiii.

Imi.

Himinbjörg's the land

Where Heimdall hath command

O'er halls of bliss they say ;
 There heaven's warder quaffs
 In peace delicious draughts,
 And speeds with joy the day.—

Song of Grímnir, st. xiii.

The teeth of Heimdall were of gold, and the sound of his trumpet penetrated through the nine worlds above the abyss of Niflheim. He was a wonderful deity ; he says of himself—

Níu em ec mæpra mavgr
 Níu em ec systra sonr.

Maidens nine are mothers mine,
 Son am I of sisters nine.

NOTE 27, PAGE 82, LINE 175, &c.

*Who ventured into Gerda's fire-bound bower,
 And forced the haughty maid by Runic power,
 To yield his master in dark Barri's grove,
 Her kindling charms, &c.*

Frey once had the presumption to ascend the sacred throne in Hliðskálf, that he might view, like Odin himself, the face of all creation. When he had looked around him, he saw a maiden standing in the North, whose beauty was so radiant that the

whole world was illumined by it. She entered the stately palace of her father Gymir, and left the god speechless with love and sadness. His melancholy was afterwards noticed by the other deities, but no one dared to address him on the subject. At length, Skirnir, his faithful attendant, was prevailed upon to ask him the cause of his distress. Frey confessed his passion, and promised to give Skirnir his self-smiting sword, if he would, in defiance of the opposition of her Jötun sire, bring Gerda to Asgard. Skirnir undertook this dangerous mission, and succeeded by his art in extorting a promise from the maiden that she would meet Frey in Barri (Barey), &c. &c.

This story is beautifully told in *För Skirnis*, one of the Eddaic songs. It is my intention to furnish the public with correct English versions of all these interesting relics of the ancient literature of the North, in an appendix to my Odinic lays.

NOTE 28, PAGE 83, LINE 184.

For thou shalt reap great honour from my shame.

Freyja, like the Grecian *Ἑρατώ*, was celebrated for her amours; her wonderful necklace *Brisíngr*, was said to have been purchased at the expense of her chastity.

NOTE 29, PAGE 83, LINE 194.

She said and raised it to her lips divine.

This was a compliment that the Norse maiden frequently paid a favoured warrior. The custom of drinking to success, to victory, and to the gods, prevailed universally in ancient Scandinavia; and the early converts to Christianity seldom forgot at their carousals to drink to the health of Christ, or to their favourite St. Michael.

NOTE 30, PAGE 83, LINES 199, 200, 201.

*"Too well keen Heimdall knows,
Who on red Bifröst's arch the signal blows.
Yes, yes," cried Freyja; "'tis the Gjallar-horn."*

Bifröst (from bifa, to tremble; and röst, a rest), the rainbow, the bridge of the gods. On its arch stood Heimdall, the warder of the gods (Vörðr goða), to give alarm when danger threatened the inhabitants of Asgard. He needed less sleep than a bird, and saw by day and by night a hundred leagues around him: he could hear the grass grow on the earth and the wool on the backs of sheep. Gjallar-horn was the name of his trumpet.

NOTE 31, PAGE 84, LINE 210.

A thousand ages with Elvidnir's Queen.

Elviðnir (Stormy-breadth) was the name of the hall of Death (Hela).

NOTE 32, PAGE 84, LINE 215.

If any Jötun break through Odin's host.

The Jötnar (sing. Jötun) were the gigantic inhabitants of Utgard. See note 18, p. 171, and note 1, p. 182.

NOTE 33, PAGE 85, LINE 230.

And all the fiery woes of Ragnarok.

Ragnarökr (crepuscula deorum), the conflagration of the universe. It is, say the Eddas, to be preceded by seven intense and stormy winters, which will succeed each other without one intervening summer. The passions of mankind will be under no restraint; and violence and crime will hasten the dreaded hour of retribution.

NOTE 34, PAGE 85, LINE 233.

In came the gentle Hnossa, deadly pale.

A Grace, the lovely daughter of Freyja.

NOTE 35, PAGE 85, LINE 238.

From the hollow bosom of dark Nagelfare.

Nagelfare (Naglfar), the largest of ships, built of the nails of the dead. It was to bear the foes of the Æsir to Vígríth, and the giant Hrym was to be its helmsman.

NOTE 36, PAGE 85, LINE 239.

At Hymir's heels stalks Fenrir fierce and grim.

Hymir was a vast giant of Jötunheim and the famous antagonist of Thor.

Fenrir was the son of Loki and Ángurboði; he was possessed of immense strength, and much dreaded by the Æsir; but they eventually succeeded by artifice in securing him with the magic chain Gleipnir to the rocks Gjöll and Thviti.

Ulf se ec liggia

Ár ósi for

Unz rivfaz regin.

Ægis-drecca, st. xli.

At Ragnarök, it is said, his fetters will burst, and he repay the gods for their treachery, by devouring the noblest of their number.

NOTE 37, PAGE 86, LINE 246.

*I fled as hideous Jörmungand's vast length
Came rolling onward, &c.*

Snýz Iórmvngandr
I iðtvnmópi,
Ormr knýr vnnir.—*Völuspá*, st. xliv.

Jörmungand in giant-mood,
Turns him from the smitten flood.

Jörmungand, the serpent of Midgard, was the offspring of Loki and Ángurboði. He was cast by Alfaðir into the ocean that surrounds the earth, and there he lay till he had grown so prodigiously that he formed a girdle which encompassed the world.

NOTE 38, PAGE 86, LINE 251.

Odin, Frey, Vidar, Heimdall, Tyr, and Thor.

Vidar (Viðar), the God of Silence and Meditation, the avenger of Odin. He was scarcely inferior to Thor in strength, and the Æsir had great confidence in him in times of peril. Landvidi was the name of his mansion :

Hrisi vex
Oc há grasi

Vidars land víði.
Enn þar mavgr af læzc
Af mars baki
Fröcn ok hefna favðor.

Grímnis-mál, st. xvii.

Landvithi, Vidar's hall,
Round which the foliage clings,
Shows but a verdant wall ;
Yet thence the valiant springs
From his steed in ire
To 'venge his slaughtered sire.

Song of Grímnir, st. xvii.

Týr, the God of Courage. When the gods asked the wolf Fenrir to prove the strength of a slender chain which the dwarfs had made for them, he refused to allow them to bind him with it, unless one of their number would permit his hand to remain between his jaws as a pledge of their good faith. Týr alone had the boldness to comply with this condition ; he lost his right hand in consequence, but afterward used his left with equal dexterity.

NOTE 39, PAGE 86, LINE 253.

O'er the Einherjar's heads flew to their goal.

Einherjar (sing. Einheri), the elect warriors of Odin.

NOTE 40, PAGE 86, LINES 254, 255, 256.

*The radiant virgins Guda, Thúda, Gjöll,
Herffjötur, Hilda, Skögun, Skulda, Mist,
Hlökk, Randgríd, Rota, Reginlief, and Hrist.*

The Valkyrjor. See note 13, p. 169. Hrist and Mist were Odin's cup-bearers; Skulda went to battle to appoint the slain, and the rest to incite the combatants.

Hrist oc Mist vill ec

At mèr horn beri.

Skeggiöld, &c.—*Grímnis-mál, st. xxxvi.*

Hrist and Mist I will

Should my goblet fill.

Skéggöld, &c.—*Song of Grímnir, st. xxxvi.*

I have written Gjöll instead of Göll (from gjallr) to preserve the soft sound of g for the rhyme.

NOTE 41, PAGE 87, LINE 262.

Its glittering fragments fell on Hlódyn's breast.

Hlóðyn, or Hludana, the Goddess of the Earth, is supposed to have been identical with the Herthus mentioned by Tacitus. She was the spouse of Odin and the mother of the Æsir. She is commonly called Frigga; Fensalir was the name of her mansion, and

her attendants were Fulla, Hlín, and Gná. Frea, or Frigga, knew the destinies of gods and men, but never revealed them. Odin once said to Loki—

Ærr ertu Loki
 Oc örviði,
 Hví nè legskapu Loki :
 Avrlög Frigg
 Hygg ec at avll viti,
 Þótt hon siálfgi segi.
 Loki, thou art insane ;
 From efforts vain,
 Why dost thou not refrain ?
 By Frigg alone,
 Futurity is known,
 Albeit by her not shown.

NOTE 42, PAGE 86, LINE 258.

Fenrir and ghastly Garm shook heaven amain.

Garm was the first of hounds ; he was bound with chains in a cave called Gnípa, but regains his freedom at Ragnarök.

NOTE 43, PAGE 87, LINE 264.

The fire and poison that spread through the air.

Consuming fire will, it is said, precede the footsteps of Surtur and his host, and follow in their track ;

Jörmungand will infect the air with his venom ; and the hearts of all in heaven and earth, will faint with fear when the twilight of the gods shall overshadow the universe.

NOTE 44, PAGE 87, LINE 271.

Poor Freyja wept ; her tears of liquid gold.

See the next note.

NOTE 45, PAGE 87, LINE 274.

That Odur's peerless child indeed was dead.

Odur was the husband of Freyja ; he left his consort to travel into distant worlds, and never returned again. Freyja, says the Edda, continually weeps on account of his absence, and her tears are of ruddy gold.

NOTE 46, PAGE 88, LINES 295, 296.

And thou to Jötunheim must hie with me ;

My icy home hath need of one like thee.

The giants of Utgard coveted the lovely brides of the Æsir. When the mallet of Hlórrida fell into the hands of Thrym, a Thursa drottinn of great renown,

he refused to restore the weapon unless he received Freyja in return. The gods were in a great dilemma, for Mjöllnir (Lightning) was the protection of heaven, and Freyja the queen of its pleasures. At last, Thor, disguised in the apparel of the Goddess of Beauty, visited the giant himself, obtained possession of the thunder-bolt, and paid him the wages of his audacity.

NOTE 47, PAGE 89, LINE 309.

Charged boldly on Örgelmir's monstrous race.

The Frost-giants. Örgelmir, in their language, was the name of their common ancestor, but the Æsir called him Ymir. See note 59, p. 237.

NOTE 48, PAGE 89, LINE 312.

Ere the dismayed Hrínthursar could escape.

The Frost-giants. Sing. Hrínthurs.

NOTE 49, PAGE 89, LINE 313.

Vidólf and Bölthorn felt the slender steel.

All witches came of Vidólf. Bölþorn (Baneful-thorn) was the name of the father of Besla, the wife of Bör; but this is not the same.

NOTE 50, PAGE 89, LINE 315.

Bergelmir toppled like a huge old oak.

See note 59, p. 237. The Noah or the Deucalion of the Hrímrthursar. When the sons of Bör slew Ymir, his blood flowed so copiously that it drowned all the Frost-giants but Bergelmir and his household.

Örofi vetra
 Áðr væri iörð sköpuð,
 Þá var Bergelmir borinn.
 Þat ec fyrst of-man,
 Er sá hinn frópi iötun
 Á var lúðr of-lagipr.—

Vafþrúðnismál, st. xxxv.

Countless winters past,
 Ere yet the earth had shape,
 Was born Bergelmir vast :
 I saw the crafty 'scape ;
 Stowed in his skiff away,
 Secure the giant lay.—
Song of Vafþrúðnir, st. xxxv.

NOTE 51, PAGE 89, LINE 317.

Hrymur eluded death by subtile sleight.

Hrym, or Hrymur, the leader of the giants and helmsman of Naglfar. Thor once hoped to have

slain the king of the Hrímfursar (Skrymir) as he lay asleep, but the giant was more vigilant than he thought, and the thunderbolt only cut three deep glens into the mountain, which the god had mistaken for the head of Utgarða-Loki.

NOTE 52, PAGE 89, LINE 319.

But mighty Hyrrokin came on with speed.

Hyrrokin (Fiery-darkness) was the giantess who impelled Baldur's ship into the sea—a feat which had defied the united strength of the Æsir. Four of Odin's Berserkir attempted to hold her steed, but could not prevail until they had thrown the animal on its back. See note 54, below.

NOTE 53, PAGE 90, LINE 322.

And vain the Ima's ponderous strength I wis.

Ima, giantess.

NOTE 54, PAGE 90, LINE 324.

And did all Mjöltnir threatened once to do.

Mjöltnir, or Mjöllnir, Thor's thunder-bolt. When Hyrrokin with one effort, sent the ship Hrínghorn into the sea, fire flashed from the rollers, and the

land shook beneath the feet of the gods ; this violence aroused the wrath of Thor, and he would certainly have slain the giantess with his mace, had not all the Æsir instantly interceded in her behalf.

NOTE 55, PAGE 90, LINE 325.

Logi evaded Vali by a cheat.

Logi (Flame) was the giant who ate faster than Loki.

NOTE 56, PAGE 90, LINE 327.

Well Hugi proved that hour his matchless pace.

Hugi (Thought), Utgardelok's page, was the swiftest of foot ; he ran a race with Thjalfi, an attendant of Thor celebrated for his agility, and won it with scarce an effort.

NOTE 57, PAGE 90, LINE 331.

All disappeared—but Ángurboði came.

Ángurboði (Anguish-boding) was the mother of Fenrir, Jörmungand, and Hela, all of whom she had by Loki, the Spirit of Evil. The mystery of her character is complete and almost sublime.

NOTE 58, PAGE 90, LINE 339.

Who 'scape her net, &c.

Rán was always provided with a net, in which she caught the treasure and entangled the persons that fell into the sea.

NOTE 59, PAGE 90, LINE 340.

Shall die old Ymir's blood its ancient hue.

Ymir, a cosmogonic giant, the first modification of the matter of chaos. The venomous floods and vapours of Elivágar flowed on till they were frozen in the northern part of the abyss of Ginnúngagap ; from the south, the light and heat of Muspellheim penetrated into this dark and icy gulf, melted its gelid poison, and generated the vast giant called Örgelmir, or Ymir, and the cow Audhumla. Ymir was the Adam of the Frost-giants.

Allir iötnar

Frá Ymi komnir.—*Völuspa.*

All the giant race

Descent to Ymir trace.

In reply to Odin Vafthrúdnir said.—

Þá er or Elivágum

Stukko eittr-dropar

Oc óx unnz or varþ iötun.

Þar eru orar ætttir

Komnar allar saman,

Því er þat æ allt till atalt.—

Vafþrúðnismál, st. xxxi.

From Elivágar's flood

Was cast the venom blood

Whose vital drops grew warm,

And took a giant's form ;

Thus rose our race—thus all

Became so strong and tall.—

Song of Vafthrúdnir, st. xxxi.

By the agency of Audhumla, Bur, the father of Bör, was created ; Bör espoused Besla, the daughter of giant Bölthorn, and their sons were Odin, Vili, and Ve. Odin and his brothers slew Ymir, and formed the world of his body. Of his blood they made the ocean ; of his flesh the earth ; of his bones the rocks ; and of his skull the canopy of heaven.

NOTE 60, PAGE 91, LINE 354.

“ Be Vala cursed !” he cried.

Ángurboði, who was a Vala of the greatest pre-science, and consulted by the Father of the Spell (Galldr's Föör) himself. See note 26, p. 177.

NOTE 61, PAGE 93, LINES 383, 384.

*The lightning's touch, like Midas king of old,
Turns the air into atmosphere of gold.*

I have admitted this classic simile to sustain the boast made in Sjöfnarillska, p. 51.

SÓLARSPÁ.

(THE SONG OF THE SUN.)

Kostir ro betri
Enn at klaúcgva se
Hveim er fúss er fara.—*För Skirnir, st. xiii.*

Imi.

That warrior's cure for woe is best
Who scorns to weep before his guest,
And bares to death his dauntless breast.

NOTE 1, PAGE 97, LINES 1, 2.

*Old Mundilfari's child in fresh array,
Stood in her flaming car with smiling Day.*

See note 15, p. 189. Day (Dagr) was the son of Dawn (Dellingr) and Night (Nótt); Dellingr was of

the Asa race, but Night was the daughter of a giant called Njörvi.

NOTE 2, PAGE 97, LINES 5, 6.

*Look, Soel, look where Freyja's darling sleeps
On Ymir's bones!*

Or Ymis holdi
Var iörð of-skavput,
En or sveita siár;
Biörg or beinum,
Baþmr or hári,
En or hausi himinn.
En or hannz heila
Voro þau hin harðmóþgu
Ský avll of-skavput.—

Grímnis-mál, st. xl.

The earth with sunlight warmed,
Of Ymir's flesh was formed;
The forests of his locks;
Of his bones, the rocks;
The ocean of his blood;
His skull an arch hath stood,

Which doth the heavens sustain;
But the clouds that threaten rain,
Were fashioned of his brain.—

Song of Grímnir, st. xl.

See note 59, p. 237.

NOTE 3, PAGE 97, LINES 6, 7, 8.

*Although Skinfaxi sweeps
With his broad mane of gold each shred of gloom
Into dark Nifelheim's eternal tomb.*

Skinfaxi (Shining-mane), the horse of Day; his harness was inlaid with gems and his mane dispelled the darkness. Nifelheim (Niflheimr), the abyss below, or beyond, the realm of Hela.

Dýrvm settan
Dellings mavgr
Jó fram keyrði
Jarkna steinvn :
Mars of Mannheim
Mavn af glóar ;
Norðr at Niflheim
Nióla sótti.—*Hrafna-galdr Oðins.*

I think I have been happy in rendering these lines into English in my second Odinic song (The Vala);

I will here give the reader a similar version in a different measure :

The son of Delling drove
His glorious steed above,
Glittering with jewels red ;
Soon o’er Mannheim spread
His golden mane of light—
All the earth was bright—
Night fled, and darkness fell
Into the abyss of hell.

NOTE 4, PAGE 98, LINES 9, 10.

*On Vali’s bosom hath Night’s foaming steed
Dropped dew which sparkles bright as Heidrun’s mead.*

Hrímfaxi was the horse of Night; at dawn he bedewed the earth with the foam that fell from his bit.—Heidrun (Heiðrún), the marvellous goat that supplied the heroes of Valhalla with mead.

NOTE 5, PAGE 99, LINE 11.

And see, by Yggdrasill, the nurse of time !

Yggdrasill is so called in the Elder Edda—

Geisar eimr

Við aldvrnára.—*Völuspá, st. li.*

Fiery vapours climb
Around the nurse of time.—

Song of the Sibyl, st. li.

See note 6, p. 213, and note 60. p. 265.

NOTE 6, PAGE 98, LINES 17, 18, 19.

*For oft Vindloni grim and Svásuth sweet,
Like brothers in that sacred valley meet;
Dread Vasad's son, &c.*

Vindloni, or Vindsval (Chilly-blast), the God of Winter, was the son of Vasad; both father and son had an icy breath and gloomy aspect; but Svásuth (Happy-south), the God of Summer, was as lovely in appearance as he was in disposition.

NOTE 7, PAGE 98, LINES 21, 22.

*As snow and sunbeams ere on Hlóðyn's lap,
Or flakes that sparkled in Ginnúngagap.*

Hlóðyn, Earth. See note 59, p. 237. Ginnúngagap, Chaos, in which vast masses of ice and gelid vapours accumulated till they met the fiery emanations of Muspellheim, when the work of creation began.

Ar var alda
 Þat er ecki var :
 Vara sandr nè sær
 Nè svalar unnir,
 Jörð fannz ei
 Nè upp-himin ;
 Gap var ginnúnga
 En gras ecki.—*Völuspá, st. iii.*

At the dawn of time,
 When there as yet was naught,
 No sand, no sea sublime,
 No stream with coolness fraught,—
 No earth below was seen,
 No heaven spread out its sheen,—
 There was one deep abyss,
 And not one verdant spot in this.—
Song of the Sibyl, st. iii.

NOTE 8, PAGE 99, LINE 27.

His evil Norn is bending over him.

The ancient Norsemen believed that every man had a Norn, or Fylgia, assigned to him at his birth, to act as a guardian or monitory spirit ; but if his

folly, misconduct, or evil destiny, drove his good genius from him, a dwarfish demon supplied her place.

NOTE 9, PAGE 99, LINES 31, 32.

*Thou needst not cut a rune,
Nor with old Mímer's head or Skuld commune.*

The art of cutting runes was a great accomplishment with the worshippers of Odin; sometimes they scattered them upon graves to raise the dead, and extort from their ghosts the secrets of the past and future.

Mímer's head, a famous oracle. Mímer was one of the hostages that the Vanir accepted of the Æsir in exchange for Njörd, Frey, and Kvásir; but the suspicious conduct of his companion so exasperated the Vanir that they cut off Mímer's head, and sent it to his kindred. Odin afterward embalmed it with such skill that it was able to answer his questions, and advise him in times of doubt and danger. At Ragnarök it is said;—

Mælr Óðinn

Við Mímis hafvt.—*Völuspá, st. xlii.*

Now Odin dread

Consulteth Mimer's head.

NOTE 10, PAGE 99, LINE 37.

Which looks like Jörmungand' bright scaly crest.

See note 37 p. 228.

NOTE 11, PAGE 99, LINE 40.

Though, as thou seest, they now are gone to Rán.

Lost; a common expression with the ancient Norseman. See note 7, p. 160, and note 58, p. 237.

NOTE 12, PAGE 100, LINES 55, 56.

Before a warlike wound be given or got,

So that his soul may fall to Hela's lot.

See note 15, p. 170, and note 8, p. 214.

NOTE 13, PAGE 100, LINES 61, 62.

Bright Soel turned, and took a Muspell spark,

And darted it against the Jöta dark.

The lights of heaven were made of the scattered sparks that had escaped from Muspellheim (Home of Fire).

Sól þat nè vissi
 Hvar hon sali átti,
 Máni þat nè vissi
 Hvat hann megins átti,
 Stjórnur þat nè vissu
 Hvar þær stapi áttu.—*Völuspá, st. v.*

Imi.

Not yet by Sól was known
 Where stood her burning throne,
 And Máni wist not what
 Dominion was his lot;
 Nor knew the sparkling stars
 Where stood their diamond cars.—

Sibylla's Song, st. v.

But Odin, Vili, and Ve, forbade these fires to wander free beneath the heaven, and determined their respective places and orbits.

The Nornir (good and bad) were of different races; I have made my hero's evil spirit a Jöta (giantess) on account of his important lineage. See note 1, p. 210.

NOTE 14, PAGE 100, LINES 65, 66.

*Ha, Glenur's spouse! fast doth thy chariot roll;
 Somewhat the faster for the fear of Sköll.*

See note 16, p. 189. Sköll, we are told, is the

wolf that pursues the sun ; he is preceded by Hati, the son of Hroðvitnir, who strives to overtake the moon. They are the symbols of the solar and the lunar eclipse.

NOTE 15, PAGE 101, LINE 72.

Old Járnvīð's sons slake their hot thirst with gore.

Járnviðr (Iron-wood), the habitation of the race of witches whose sons were enormous wolves :

Austr lýr en alldna
Í Iárnvípi,
Oc fæpir þar
Fenris kindar.—*Völuspá, st. xxxvi.*

Eastward in the Iron-wood
Sitteth the night-hag old,
And bringeth forth a giant brood,
Like Fenrir grim and bold.

NOTE 16, PAGE 102, LINES 85, 86.

*As the Einherjar slain in daily strife,
Rise at the banquet's call to hardier life.*

See note 11, p. 167.

NOTE 17, PAGE, 102, LINE 92.

His soul rose like the North's midsummer sun.

It is most probably unnecessary to inform the reader that the sun does not descend below the horizon at this season of the year in regions near the poles.

NOTE 18, PAGE 104, LINE 125.

One moment more, and his bright Völund blade.

Völundr (Velint, Wealand, Wayland) was the Dædalus of the North; weapons of his make were of inestimable value.

NOTE 19, PAGE 104, LINE 133.

For faithfully performing rites of blood.

Human sacrifice—that terrible feature of heathen faith—prevailed with the Odinists; even their kings were sometimes slaughtered to appease and propitiate their offended and reluctant deities.

NOTE 20, PAGE 105, LINE 143.

And met their godlike chief with greetings rude.

Godlike? Fiendlike, rather; the ancient deities of the North were merely demons. See note 14, p. 188.

NOTE 21, PAGE 105, LINE 145.

For not a Swede, or Dane, or son of Nor.

Nor, the founder of Norway; a mythic personage.

NOTE 22, PAGE 105, LINE 146.

Among them revered Ygg or Auku-Thor.

Yggr (the Terrible), one of the names of Odin. Auku-Thor; Thor, the Charioteer. See note 22, p. 174.

NOTE 23, PAGE 105, LINE 149.

Sigfadir's son himself!

Sigfadir, the Father of Victory; Odin. See note 14, p. 169.

NOTE 24, PAGE 105, LINE 152.

And Jarls were proud to combat in his train.

Jarls ; earls, noblemen.

NOTE 25, PAGE 105, LINES 153, 154.

Deeming that death in his array bestowed

A warmer welcome in his sire's abode.

The rich, noble, and valiant, were alone welcome in Valhalla ; those who accompanied great heroes, or went in throngs to Odin, had the most cordial and splendid reception.

NOTE 26, PAGE 106, LINE 167.

When they in Skögu's iron garb were clad.

Mail, defensive armour. Skögu was a Valkyrja :

Skorin var Sköglar kápa

At Skjoldunga hjaldri.—

Lodbrókarkviða, st. xviii.

The iron robe by Skögu worn,

By Skjoldung's hardy sons was torn.

NOTE 27, PAGE 106, LINE 171.

*Rán hath enough already ; would ye yet
Pass where the greedy goddess spreads her net ?*

See note 58, p. 237.

NOTE 28, PAGE 106, LINE 173.

Up, sons of Endil !

Víkingar, sailors. Endil, a celebrated sea-rover.

Haldorða sá ek brytja

Ekki smátt fyrir úlfa,

Endils niða bröndum.—*Krákumál, st. xviii.*

Endil's sons I saw, who kept their word,
Carving for wolves a banquet with the sword.

NOTE 29, PAGE 107, LINE 186.

And when ye are upon old Ægir's waste.

At sea ; on the ocean. See note 18, p. 190.

Allr var Ægir sollinn.—*Krákumál, st. ii.*

All Ocean was swollen.

NOTE 30, PAGE 107, LINE 188.

When ye were thwarted by the wrath of Fro.

Fro, another name of the God of the Winds.

NOTE 31, PAGE 107, LINE 189.

The Sjárfarörm is there with her bold crew.

The Víkingr generally named his war-vessel after some peculiar serpent, bird, or wild beast, and all his skill and industry appears to have been exhausted in carving and gilding it in conformity with this idea. The dragons were the larger *class* of war-ships.

NOTE 32, PAGE 108, LINES 208, 209.

Like bolt from Thrúðváng shot,

The chief leaped on him with tremendous bound.

Thrúðvángr, or Thrúðheimr (Home of Fortitude), was the abode of Thor, the God of Thunder. See note 22, p. 174.

The Norse warriors were wonderfully expert in all bodily exercises ; and we read of almost incredible feats of leaping, swimming, &c., in the Sagas.

NOTE 33, PAGE 108, LINE 218.

And strengthened as if Megingjardir braced.

Megingjardir, Thor's belt of might, which, when he girded it about him, increased his strength twofold.

NOTE 34, PAGE 109, LINES 235, 236.

As fast as Mjölnir's blows

E'er struck to earth Hlórrida's dwarfish foes.

See note 7, p. 171, and note 22. p. 174. Thor was constantly employed in making war upon the evil genii of every sort; and, albeit he thought it more glorious to vanquish the Titans of Utgard, the dwarfs and Elves of Darkness necessarily came in for a share of his hostility; as the case of poor Litur whom he cast into the funeral pyre of Baldur, will sufficiently testify.

NOTE 35, PAGE 110, LINE 251.

Like light round Gerda's bower his weapons flashed.

The bower of the maiden Gerda (imper. of the Aurora Borealis) was surrounded with flames.

NOTE 36, PAGE 112, LINES 295, 296.

*Even though it must at Hela's table sup,
And quaff her sluggish handmaid's gall-filled cup.*

Hunger was Hela's table and her handmaid was Slowness (Gånglavl).

NOTE 37, PAGE 113, LINES 310, 311, 312.

*And fain would bind my limbs with Gleipnir's length;
And he is right—I wait my time—methinks,
An that were come, I could burst Gelgja's links.*

After having successively burst the massive chains Læding and Drómi, Fenrir was persuaded to try his strength on a slender fetter called Gleipnir; but in this he was deceived, for the more he strove to disengage himself from it, the tighter it clung to him. The gods only laughed at his struggles, for they knew that their foe was secure till Ragnarök. Gelgja was the chain that was attached to Gleipnir; the Æsir drew it through the rock Gjöll, and fastened it to another called Thviti.

NOTE 38, PAGE 120, LINE 445.

As swift as down red Bifröst speeds the ghost.

It was supposed that at night the Einherjar often

mounted their ethereal steeds, galloped down the bridge of the gods, and sunk into their tombs, or barrows; there they remained till Valhalla's bird of morning called them to the sport of Hilda.

NOTE 39, PAGE 122, LINES 483, 484, 485.

Lest woven charms with coolness cover him

When fire appears to wither every limb.

He fights by spell, &c.

Great powers were ascribed by the ancient Norsemen to magic garments and enchanted weapons; their invincible heroes, like Achilles, made "assurance double sure," by providing themselves with both. A romantic Saga informs us, that when King Ragnar was thrown by the command of Ella into the den of vipers, not one of them would fix upon him until he was divested of the spell-woven tunic which his queen Aslauga had given him. This is one instance, but many might be cited; indeed, it was the common resource of the vanquished to attribute their defeat to the charmed mail or weapons of their enemies. See note 6, p. 185.

NOTE 40, PAGE 123, LINES 495, 496.

*And that his strength no wizard vitals feed—
No impious Galldur, or no loathsome Seid !*

Galldur, the secret of Runic combination. See note 5, p. 184, and note 6, p. 185. Seid (Seiðr) was the art of preparing a mixture, of which a quotation from Shakespeare will give the reader the best idea.

“ Round about the cauldron go ;
In the poisoned entrails throw—
Toad, that under coldest stone,
Days and nights hast thirty-one
Sweltered venom sleeping got,
Boil thou first i' the charmed pot !
Fillet of a fenny snake
In the cauldron boil and bake :
Eye of newt, and toe of frog,
Wool of bat, and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork, and blind-worm's sting,
Lizard's leg, and owlet's wing,
Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf ;
Witches' mummy ; maw and gulf,
Of the ravined salt-sea shark ;
Root of hemlock, digged in the dark,

For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble."

The roasted hearts of witches, serpents, and wolves, were food which was supposed to impart superhuman cunning, courage, and ferocity: Loki's evil qualities were ascribed to his indulgence in this unnatural aliment.

NOTE 41, PAGE 123, LINE 508.

Of hapless Baldur's fate and Hela's right.

See note 15, p. 170; and note 48, p. 261.

NOTE 42, PAGE 124, LINES 511, 512.

*When Death herself, as is they say her wont,
In midnight vision, &c.*

Thus she appeared and spoke to Baldur before he was slain by Hödur.

NOTE 43, PAGE 124, LINE 515.

How will he loathe the livid Queen's caress.

Hela's complexion below her waist was fair, but above her girdle it was of a sickly blue. Hon er blá hálf en hálf með havrundar lit, &c.

NOTE 44, PAGE 125, LINES 529, 530.

*High in her chariot stood majestic Night,
And guided through the gloom Hrímfaxi's flight.*

Hrímfaxi (Frosty-mane, or Dewy-crest) was the steed that dragged the car of Night.

NOTE 45, PAGE 125, LINE 532.

From Utgard's icy bounds to Idavöll.

See note 18, p. 171.

Asgard was supposed to be situated in the middle of the universe and Iðavöllr was its centre.

NOTE 46, PAGE 125, LINE 535.

Beyond the confines where the Dvergar stand.

The four dvergar, or dwarfs, Austri (East), Vestri (West), Norðri (North), and Suðri (South), who like Atlas, supported the weight of the cope of heaven, or Ymir's skull, on their shoulders.

‡ NOTE 47, PAGE 125, LINES 539, &c.

How strong is Auth, her son, &c. &c.

Night had Auth (Wealthy) by Naglfari, her first

consort ; by Annar, her second, she had Jörd (Earth) ; and by her last, Delligr, or Dawn, she had Day (Dagr). Delligr is also called Á in this poem.

NOTE 48, PAGE 125, LINE 345.

And since by Hödur's spear good Baldur fell.

Baldur the Good, having been tormented with ominous dreams which threatened his life, told them to his kindred deities, who agreed to exact an oath in his behalf from every thing under their dominion ; Frigga accordingly received the pledges of all diseases, elements, metals, animals, plants, poisons, substances, &c., that they would not harm Baldur ; and so strictly was this covenant kept, that it became the pastime of the Æsir at their meetings, to get Baldur to stand up as the common mark of their weapons. But Loki's malice kindled at the sight ; and, repairing to Fensalir in the form of an old woman, he led Frigga to disclose the fatal secret—there was yet one thing which was not bound to spare Baldur—the mistletoe, which the goddess had thought too young and feeble to injure him. This was enough. Loki soon made a deadly weapon of the shrub, returned to the assembly of the gods, and persuaded the blind god Hödur, under his guidance, to honour

Baldur by casting the missile at him. The dart flew from his hand, and the loveliest of the Æsir fell lifeless to the ground.

NOTE 49, PAGE 126, LINE 553.

Máni looked softly bright and sadly pale.

See note 15, p. 189.

NOTE 50, PAGE 126, LINE 557.

To Víðfinn, who lamenting hath implored.

Once Máni carried off Víðfinn's two children, Bil and Hjuki, as they were returning from the fount called Byrgir; they have been his followers ever since.

NOTE 51, PAGE 126, LINE 562.

His tears would soften Thaukt as soon as thee.

When Hela agreed to restore Baldur to the Æsir if all things, animate and inanimate, wept for him, every thing complied with the request of the messengers of the gods but an old hag that they found sitting in a cavern. When they besought her to weep Baldur out of Hel, she replied—

Þavck mun gnáta
 Þurrun tárur
 Baldrs bálfarar :
 Kyks nè dauðs nautka èc
 Kalls sonar ;
 Haldi Hel því er hefir !
 Ho ! weep will I
 With teardrops dry
 O'er Baldur's balefire light ;
 Quick or dead, I can
 Gain nought by son of man,
 Let Hela hold her right.

A suspicion prevailed that this Thaukt was no other than Loki, the Spirit of Evil, in disguise.

NOTE 52, PAGE 126, LINES 563, 564, 565.

*Or doth Hrodvitnir's son of late appear
 To gain on thee, thou drooping charioteer ?
 From Hati, &c.*

See note 14, p. 248.

NOTE 53, PAGE 126, LINE 566.

For he must yield his prey to Mánagarm.
 Verpr or þeim avllvm
 Eina nockurr

Fúngla tíugari
 Í tröllz hami.
 Fylliz fiörvi
 Feigra manna,
 Rýðr ragna siót
 Ruupum dreyra.—*Völuspá*, xxvi. xxvii

NOTE 54, PAGE 127, LINE 572.

Fenrir, Gnipa's hound, nay, Jörmungand.

See note 40, p. 230.

NOTE 55, PAGE 127, LINE 575.

The twilight of the gods will come at last.

See note 30, p. 196, and note 33, p. 226.

NOTE 56, PAGE 127, LINE 580.

Lovlier than Hjuki fond or Hvítabil.

Máni's two attendants. See note 50, p. 262.

NOTE 57, PAGE 128, LINES 597, 598.

*I dare not rescue—Odin victory gave,
 And Hela would be furious should I save.*

See note 14, p. 169, and note 15, p. 170.

NOTE 58, PAGE 128, LINE 601.

How wise ye gods are ! Skuld hath nought to do, &c.

Ironia. The ancient Scandinavians supposed that women were more familiar with the secrets of futurity than men ; great deference was consequently paid to their judgment on matters of the most vital importance.

NOTE 59, PAGE 129, LINE 619.

Sweet Delling comes ! Ah, see the rainbow flowers !

Dellingr, or Ár ; Dawn. See note 1, p. 240. .

NOTE 60, PAGE 129, LINES 623, 624.

As by deep Urdar-fount for omen good,

'Neath Yggdrasill his ruby chariot stood.

See note 61, p. 208, and note 19, p. 219.

Ask veit ec standa

Heitir Yggdrasill,

Hár þapmr ansinn

Hvíta auri :

Þapan koma dagggvar

Þærs í dala falla,

Stendr æ yfir grönn

Urðar brvnni.—*Völuspá, st. xvii.*

Imi.

An ash called Yggdrasill I know,
 On which three holy maidens cast
 White waters, springing from below
 Into the Fountain of the Past :
 From that tree descend the dews,
 Which o'er the verdant dales diffuse ;
 High o'er the spring it lifts its head,
 And wide its ever-blooming branches spread.

The water of Urdar-fount was so pure and holy
 that whatsoever was dipped into it came out as
 white as the film of an egg.

NOTE 61, PAGE 130, LINES 637, 638.

Forgetful of the doom

Of Durin's and Mothsognir's sons of gloom.

Durinn and Moðsognir were the two ancient chiefs
 of the dwarfs ; they ascended from their subterranean
 homes and walked on the surface of the earth at
 night ; but none of the Dvergar durst remain above
 when

Dro liek Dvalins

Drösvll í reið.—Hrafna-galdr Oðins.

In the car of Day,

Drove the dwarfs' bright play.

Odin's Raven-song.

Day was called the Mockers of Dvalinn because his light blinded any of the dwarfish race that it surprised at sunrise.

NOTE 62, PAGE 130, LINE 644.

To Jötunheim where Njörvi's palace lies.

See note 1, p. 240.

NOTE 63, PAGE 131, LINE 657.

Before them Svalin held an aureate shield.

Svalin heitir, han stendr

Sólo fyrí

Sciöldr scinanda guði.

Biörg ok brim ec veit

At brenna scola,

Ef han fellr í frá.—

Grímnis-mál, st. xxxviii.

Svalin, a shining god doth stand,

A shield before Sól's ardent face ;

I know the ocean and the land

Would burn if that fell from its place.—

Song of Grímnir, st. xxxviii.

NOTE 64, PAGE 132, LINE 665.

While to his ear, well nigh as Heimdall's sharp.

See note 30, p. 225.

DAUDADRAPA ; EDA, HELJARVON.
(Death-song ; or, the Hope of Hela.)

NOTE 65, PAGE 132, LINE 670.

Ye may call me a nidding in spite of my fame.

A nidding ; a dastard, a wretch : we have, however, no term in English which will adequately express the infamy implied by this epithet. See note 41, p. 200.

NOTE 66, PAGE 132, LINE 672.

My soul is familiar with Muspellheim's breath.

Muspellheim's breath ; fire. See note 17, p. 190 ; and note 27, p. 194.

NOTE 67, PAGE 133, LINE 677.

Ye bastards of Baldur !

See note 34, p. 198.

NOTE 68, PAGE 133, LINE 682.

Though portals five hundred and forty it boast.

Fimm hundrut dura
Oc of fiórum tavgum

Svá hygg ec á Valhöllu vera :
 Atta hundröð einheria
 Gánga senn or einum durum,
 Þá er þeir fara við vitni at vega.—

Grímnis-mál, st. xxiii.

Five hundred portals wide,
 And forty more beside,
 Vallhalla hath I trow ;
 Eight hundred heroes go
 At once through every door
 Against the wolf to war.

Song of Grímnir, st. xxiii.

NOTE 69, PAGE 133, LINE 685.

Yet the face of All-father I never may see.

All-father, Odin. See note 8, p. 165.

NOTE 70, PAGE 133, LINE 690.

That with Vidar or Ida we ever shall reign.

Sér hon uppkoma,
 Avðro sinni
 Jörð or ægi
 Idia gröna.—
 Finnaz Æsir
 Á Iðavelli.—

Mvno ósánir
 Acrar vaxa ;
 Bavls mvn allz batna,
 Baldvr mvn coma.—*Völuspá*.

Imi.

From the dark blue main,
 Arising once again,
 The earth with verdure bright,
 Glads the maiden's sight.
 Surviving gods convene
 On Ida's flowery green.
 Unsown each waving field
 Shall golden harvests yield ;
 And under Baldur's sway,
 Shall evils cease for aye.—

Song of the Sibyl.

Viparr oc Vali
 Byggia ve goða,
 Þá er slocnar Svrti logi.—

Vafþrúdnismál, st. li.

When Surtur's flames no longer burn,
 Vidar and Vali to heaven return.

NOTE 71, PAGE 134, LINE 691.

Through the halls of drear Náströnd, &c.

See note 30, p. 179.

Sal sa hon standa
 Sölu fiarri
 Ná-stravndu á ;
 Norðr horfa dyrr :
 Falla eitrdropar
 Inn of líóra ;
 Sá er undin salr
 Orma hryggium.
 Sá hon þar vapa
 Þunga stauma, &c.—

Völuspá, xxxiv, xxrv.

Far from the sun, by light forsook,
 A hall the maid descried,
 Its dismal portals northward look
 Upon the Dead-strand wide, &c.

As in the text.

NOTE 72, PAGE 134, LINES 695, 696.

*Your fair ones and high Hvergelmir shall wail,
 While the king of the deep, &c.*

En í Hvergelmi er verst :
 Þar qvelr (saug) Níðhavggr
 Nái framgengna.—*Völuspa, st. xxrv.*

But in Hvergelmir is the worst (hell) :
 There is Níthhauggr fed
 On corpses of the dead.

Níðhauggr, (Deep-gnawer), a huge dragon, the king of the innumerable serpents, that lay under the lowest root of Yggdrasil.

NOTE 73, PAGE 134, LINE 697.

I will laugh as I die, &c.

Lífs eru liðnar stundir,
Læjandi skal ek deyja!—*Lodbrokarkviða, st. xxix.*

The winged hours of life retire ;
I die—but laughing I expire.

Semivigil subsedit enim, cubitoque reclinis
Ridendo accepit letum, mortemque cachinno
Sprevit, et Elysium gaudens successit in orbem.
Magna viri virtus, quæ risu calluit uno
Supremam celare necem, summumque dolorem
Corporis ac mentis læto compescere vultu.—

Saxo Grammaticus.

NOTE 74, PAGE 135, LINE 721.

*From Alfrauthulla, when the Vala sung
The doom of Fate, &c.*

Alfrauthulla, (Elf-light, or Rosy-ray), one of the names of the sun. The Völuspá, an ancient pro-

æcy which reveals the destiny of gods and men,
s supposed to have been sung by a Vala to the
emblem Æsir.

NOTE 75, PAGE 136, LINE 728.

A child whose light shall open every tomb.

Eina dóttur
Berr Alfraupull,
Áðr hana Fenrir fari:
Sú skal rípa,
Er regin deyia,
Móþvr bravtir mæ.—

Vafþrúðnismál, st. xlvii.

One daughter fair
The sun shall bear
Ere Fenrir rends his prey;
Her coursers' tread,
When gods are dead,
Shall track her mother's way.—

Song of Vafthrúdnir, st. xlvii.

NOTE 76, PAGE 137, LINE 754.

And that ere long the wolf-like warriors show.

The Víkíngar that were clad with the skins of
lives, were the most ferocious of all.

NOTE 77, PAGE 137, LINE 758.

Some his weird garb and magic arms adjust.

See note 39, p. 257.

NOTE 78, PAGE 138, LINE 765.

Like a Berserker in his dreadless trance.

See note 7. p. 165.

NOTE 79, PAGE 138, LINE 776.

To carve an eagle on his shrinking back.

Four lines, describing the rista örn, are omitted here; the particulars of this dreadful punishment are too revolting for poetry.

NOTE 80, PAGE 140, LINE 808.

Weeping like Vanadis, and faint with dread.

Vanadis, Freyja. See note 14, p. 217.

NOTE 81, PAGE 140, LINE 818.

Stern Syn shall cease from her malignant guile.

Syn, the Goddess of Opposition and Denial.

NOTE 82, PAGE 140, LINE 822.

Depart across the realm of mighty Njörd.

Njörd, as well as Ægir, had rule over the sea.
See note 17, p. 218.

NOTE 83, PAGE 141, LINES 829, 830.

*So much of Fate, last night Góthbodi gave
To me alone in Nida's starry cave.*

Qoðboði, the Prophetess of 'Good. Nida's starry cave, in the mountains of Nida (Niðafjöll), on which stood the celestial palace called Sindri.

NOTE 84, PAGE 141, LINE 837.

As Mundilfari's mortal children passed.

See note 15, p. 189.

NOTE 85, PAGE 142, LINE 843.

Of the Einherjar's golden-crested bird.

Gól vm Asom

Gvllincambi,

Sá vegr havlda at hiarar

At heriafavðvrs.—*Völuspá, st. xxxix.*

The fowl with the golden comb,
 Among the gods hath sung,
 Starting all 'neath Odin's dome,
 So loud his clarion rung.

Song of the Sibyl, st. xxxix.

NOTE 86, PAGE 142, LINE 845.

Till Huginn and loved Muninn Mannheim quit.

Huginn, Reason or Observation; Muninn, Memory. In Grímnis-mál Odin says—

Huginn oc Muninn
 Fliúgia hverian dag
 Jórmungrund ifir :
 Óumc ec Hugin
 At hann aptr nè komþ,
 Þó síámec ec meirr at Munin.—

Grímnis-mál, st. xx.

Daily Huginn and Muninn fly
 Over the earth and through the sky;
 I fear lest Huginn I shall lack,
 But more lest Muninn come not back.—

Song of Grímnir, st. xx.

NOTE 87, PAGE 142, LINE 840.

Like Geri and bold Freki at his feet.

Odin, say the Eddas, does not partake himself of

the food set before him, but dispenses his meat to the wolves Geri and Freki.

Gera oc Freka

Seðr gunntamiðr

Hróðigr Heria-föðr :

En við vín eitt

Vapn gavfigr

Opinn æ lifir.—*Grímnis-mál, st. xix.*

The Father of hosts, the god of martial fame,
Doth Geri's and gaunt Freki's hunger tame ;
But Odin, king of arms, the goblet drains,
And wine alone for aye his strength sustains.—

Song of Grímnir, st. xix.

The Icelandic of the foregoing quotations, will have given the reader an excellent idea of what our language would have been, had it not received such innumerable additions from the French and Latin. The Old Norse will, I hope, soon attract the attention to which it is entitled ; at present we have scarcely the type required to print it correctly.

EPTIRMÁLI.

(EPILOGUE.)

Fýsumst hins at hætta !—*Krákumál, st. xxix.*

Imi.

My drowsy soul no more inspire ;—

Here will we cease, my Ása lyre !

NOTE 1, PAGE 149, LINE 49.

The rolling clouds above were dropping gore.

Nú er ógurligt um at lítaz,

At dreyrugt ský dregr með himni.—*Norna-mál.*

Imi.

'Tis horrid now to gaze on high,

Where gory clouds drag through the sky.

The first of my Odinic songs was completed in the June of the present year ; but I allowed a considerable interval to elapse after it was sent to press, before I wrote the preceding notes, that I might, in addition to what I had already gathered in my study of Scandinavian mythology, from the published and manuscript copies of the Eddas and Sagas, furnish myself with materials for the illustration of my poem, from the erudite works of Prof. Finn Magnusen, Suhm, Müller, Rask, Rafn, Grim, &c. ; and I soon made a sufficient number of extracts from the writings of the celebrated authors I have named, to have rendered my annotations very instructive and valuable. Yet but little of the matter thus gleaned, appears in this work ; for, although many passages of "The Viking," requiring explanation, had been omitted for fear of wearying the reader, although I condensed my commentary as much as possible, and left many novel positions without a word of defence, the numerous quotations (all too important to forego) taken from the Elder Edda, proved sufficient to swell this volume to a size which considerably exceeded my publisher's estimate and my own calculations.

I hope that the unlearned reader will pardon a little pedantic display on my part, and that the learned one will generously overlook a few verbal errors, which are almost inevitable in the first edition of a work of this

nature. A young and inexperienced author has some claim to this indulgence, and I only ask it for such mistakes as are obviously oversights. I have, it is true, now and then asserted *the independence of the Muse*. Poets, like the widow in the play, have great command of language, and are sometimes very arbitrary in exercising it. Yet I have aimed at correctness, and I will, if possible, attain to it.

When I commenced my epic illustrations of Odinic mythology, I imagined that little poetry had been written with a similar design. I was mistaken; the votaries of the Muse had been here also. I had, of course, read Sir Walter Scott's "Harold the Dauntless;" but the Hon. William Herbert's beautiful poem entitled "Helga" was unknown to me; for neither that nor his elegant versions of some of the Eddaic songs, have the wide circulation which they deserve. Sir William Drummond and other bards have likewise made bold but abortive attempts to open the rich vein of poetic ore which lies hidden somewhere in the rugged Parnassus of the North. I have, however, since "The Viking" was printed, read several Danish poems on the subject of much happier conception; of these, Oehlenschläger's "Nordiske Guder," an interesting paraphrase of the Prose Edda, is perhaps the most successful.

There is no lack of eminent foreign prose writers

on Scandinavian mythology; they have *more* than exhausted the theme; but we have only a few works on the subject. Pigott's "Manual of Scand. Mythology," and I. A. Blackwell's excellent edition of "Mallet's Northern Antiquities," published by Bohn, are the only English works of the kind that I have consulted with advantage. The latter contains a very correct and elegant version of the younger Edda. G. W. Dasent has also made a very quaint and literal translation of the same treatise. These works are good, but they are not enough. Where there is a demand, there will soon be a supply; and it has been my humble but ardent endeavour to awaken that curiosity which is the surest earnest of both.

I have, I believe, made my due acknowledgments. Coincidences with writings of which I am ignorant, may, possibly, be found in the preceding pages; but none, I trust, of sufficient importance to justify the charge of plagiarism, or affect my claim to originality. I have neither neglected the study of our great masters and their classic models, nor descended to servile imitation of either,—unless the adoption of a few of their epithets and phrases, which have almost become common property, be such—for he that disdains to listen to the songs of others, has scarce a better claim to be heard than he

that has no song of his own. But lest the reader imagine that I intend to anticipate criticism, I will, without further apology, bid him farewell. If what I have written please him, we shall, perhaps, meet again ; if not, he that has accompanied me thus far, has, nevertheless, my sincere thanks and hearty goodwill.

THE END.



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